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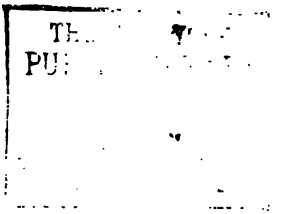

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CHRISTIAN

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DAYS AND THOUGHTS.

BY

Rev. EPHRAIM PEABODY, D. D.

SECOND EDITION.

BOSTON:
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1858.

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S. W. Chesney Del. H. Wright Smith Sc.

Ephraim Peabody

It was not by accident that the first of the Beatitudes was, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who, conscious of their spiritual poverty and looking upward, gaze on the perfection above, and long for a better and purer life. In this spirit we would approach Him who gave himself to establish a higher virtue in human hearts, to put purer affections into the home, to save men from the bondage of sin, to illuminate the darkness of the grave, and guide us to the eternal life. We join in the great and holy ordinance which connects the love of heaven with the needs of earth, not because we are strong, but because we are weak; not because we have any claim on heaven's rewards, but because we have need of heaven's mercy. When we kneel at the altar, it is in frailty and sin, and to implore forgiveness and help. We will commemorate Christ's love, though it reproach us with our ingratitude. And reverently and humbly we will hope that the remembrance of his passion may in some degree prepare us to receive the benefits of his death. Before the cross of the Sufferer and the Redeemer, let us pray for his strength to do God's will and to bear his will.

Collect.

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, who knowest our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking; we beseech thee to have compassion upon our infirmities; and those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask, vouchsafe to give us for the sake of thine infinite mercy in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE.

Dr. Peabody left directions that a volume like this, of a somewhat private and domestic character, should be prepared from his writings. He loved to associate particular scenes and trains of thought with the days set apart for them by the Church. In order to increase the influence of such associations, more especially among the young of his own Society, he had, for a long time, been intending to prepare a book of this kind. It was much in his thoughts during his last sickness; but he was too

feeble to do any thing more than give a general idea of what he desired to have done. The selections here given from his writings have been made, it is believed, in accordance with what would have been his wishes. If some of them should seem to be only remotely or fancifully connected with the places which they occupy in the book, it must be remembered how delicate and far-reaching the association of religious ideas may be; and that the most important influence of the best religious writings is often found in the trains of emotion which they awaken, and the atmosphere which they throw around the reader, almost independently of the direct instructions which they impart. If, therefore, some of the Thoughts in this book should seem to have no logical relationship to the Days under which they appear, it may none the

less be true, that, like interludes in a well-ordered service, they may harmonize with the sentiment, and add to the impressiveness of the occasion.

The book will do little good where it is hastily read and put aside. Its voice is not one to be heard in the streets, or to join in the discussions of the day. It rather asks to be admitted to the confidence of those who will receive it, in the stillness of their most retired and private hours. Its calm tones of religious tenderness and trust would find their way into the closet. It offers itself as a companion to the thoughtful in their seasons of meditation and their times of trial. It would touch their religious sensibilities. It would feed them with devout thoughts. It would store their minds with images of Divine purity and love. It would, at least, suggest to them topics of mo-

mentous interest, and gently lead them to the fountain of comfort, strength, and eternal life. J. H. M.

MILTON, *December* 18, 1857.

CONTENTS.

PREPARATORY THOUGHTS.

Salvation by Christ 3
Best Hours 5
Divine Aid 6
Reverence 8

ADVENT.

The Need of a Divine Revelation increases with the Progress of Civilization 13
Means of Christian Culture 33
A Christian Home 34
The Bible 36
Different Ways of following Christ 38
Public Worship 41

CHRISTMAS.

The Observance of Christmas 45
The Song of the Angels 47
A Christmas Exhortation 65

THE NEW YEAR.

The New Year....71
The Parting of the Ways....72
Religious Decision....82
Eternity....83

THE EPIPHANY.

Christ the Desire of all....87

ASH-WEDNESDAY.

The Goodness of God leading us to Repentance....99
Christ by his Humiliation and Death calling Men to Repentance....105
Repent ye....111

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

Temptation of Christ....121
The Bosom Sin....136

PALM-SUNDAY.

Fidelity in Loneliness....141

THURSDAY BEFORE EASTER.

The Last Supper....163
The Lord's Supper....172
The Hour is come....176
Overcoming the World through Christ....182

GOOD-FRIDAY.

The Cross....191
The World judged from the Cross....198
Attraction of the Cross....204

EASTER EVEN.

Easter Even.....213

EASTER.

Christ's Message to his Disciples.....217

The Immortal Life.....232

ASCENSION-DAY.

Heaven.....237

WHITSUNDAY.

Day of Pentecost.....249

ALL-SAINTS.

The Living and the Dead.....263

The Departed.....264

Remember the Departed.....268

Our Saints.....270

The Communion of Saints.....275

THE CONCLUSION.

The Lamps are gone out.....283

Wisdom of an Upright Heart.....288

A Mother's Influence.....289

Faithful unto Death.....291

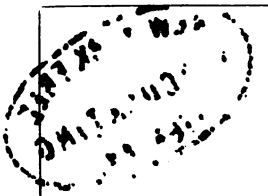
Beyond the Veil.....294

Trust in God.....296

Christ our Life.....300

PREPARATORY THOUGHTS

I



The ways in which Christ affects man's salvation are as various as the methods by which men are awakened to penitence for sin, and to love for righteousness. Where he is truly received, he puts a soul into man, lights it up with faith, and gives to its best sentiments and affections an energy which is stronger than any outward ill. The life which he awakens is the best and highest life of manhood, the life of pure thoughts and elevated purposes, of righteous principles and self-denying affections. It is the life of faith, of reverence, and filial obedience. He, in whose soul these affections are awakened, and these principles established, can never be out of place where God, or where good beings are. It is a life full of the omens of immortality. A reverential trust in God seems to associate one with His eternal existence. Prayer takes the soul within the veil, and all righteous affections seem to have a place in the permanent order of the moral world.

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PREPARATORY THOUGHTS.

SALVATION BY CHRIST.

SALVATION by Chriſt is the subject of the New Teſtament. To save men was the one purpose of Chriſt's coming; and the word salvation includes in it all that is higheſt and moſt hopeful in man's deſtiny. Chriſt came to save that which is loſt, to save his people from their sins, to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God,—to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

But how does Chriſt save men? Not by any single method, but by whatever he was, or did, or taught, or suffered, through which a human soul is redeemed from sin. Here I do not speak of what was neceſſary in order that

God might forgive sin, nor how Chriſt's miſsion accorded with the secret purposes of the Moſt High. These myſteries are above us. It is not neceſſary that we should underſtand them. What I wiſh to ſhow is that Chriſt saves men by arousing and awakening the better life of the soul,—that till this is done nothing is done, and that with this all is done, and that it is done through means as varied as human wants and circumſtances. There were Pharisees probably saved by Chriſt's rebuke of their hypocriſy. There were sinners doubtless saved by his compaſſionate friendliness. The guilty woman that knelt and waſhed his feet with her tears, he won by encouraging words. I can imagine that there were children on whom his hands were laid in benediction, who, through the memory of that act, afterwards became apoſtles and martyrs. Through these and many other ways he ſtill acts on mankind. Chriſt saves men by every better thought which his words put into their hearts, by the holier purposes which he awakens, by the benignity of his example, by the power of self-sacrifice, by the divinity of his death, by encouragements

and by warnings. Sometimes his power is felt through life; his name is the firſt on the lips of childhood, and the laſt in the fluttering and feeble breath of the dying hour; and sometimes his influence is not felt till trial or sorrow or remorse open the heart to the Helper and the Comforter.

But whatever the method of salvation, the result is the same. It is a turning from sin to righteousness. It is the awakening of the soul—a new birth to a higher and Chriſtian life. Without this there is no salvation, and with it, whatever the method, the man is saved.

BEST HOURS.

There are seasons when, for the moment at leaſt, the power of the world seems to drop. A ſtrange and awful sense of responsibility comes upon us. Aspirations rise up out of the soul like the morning miſt kindling in the sun as it rises from the mountain top towards heaven. We long for a higher and holier life. The vanity of the world, the worth of virtue, the goodness of God, and the peace of a truſting

and devout heart are revealed to us. It is a heavenly vision open before the soul. . . . These hours, when the soul is freed from its bonds, and holds communion with truth and God, and sees revealed the realities of its exiſtence, are bleſſed hours—hours of heaven—hours which if obeyed ſhall raise the soul upward to heaven. Repel not the heavenly vision by disobedience. Sacrifice any thing rather than these heavenly impulses. Give up any thing that interferes with carrying them out into the life. These hours of the soul's communion with truth and God are the precious hours of life. They are the scattered fountains in the desert, at which the fainting traveller revives his strength and courage. Then heavenly voices speak, and happy is he who gives heed to the heavenly vision, which is from God, and conducts to God.

DIVINE AID.

And let it be remembered that this Divine aid is really help. It does not supersede human exertion, but helps to make it effective. It

does not overbear the human faculties, but invigorates them. It does not subſtitute a foreign virtue, attaching it like foreign fruit to dead branches; but it puts life into the trunk, that it may bear fruit of itself.

The idea seems too sublime to be true, and yet it is in accordance with the whole order of nature. The little flower that in the open meadows lives and dies in a season, what agencies have concentrated themselves upon it! The wondrous chemiſtry of the soil, the rains that have drifted up from the far-off sea to pour out their refreſhment around it, the sunlight, coming myriads of miles to swathe its roots in their benignant warmth, the revolution of the seasons, all that is grandeſt in the universe, conspire to unfold into life that which is humbleſt. So the human soul lives in the midſt of heavenly help. The course of nature is not something apart from the Divine Being, but through that order God comes down and meets the wants of the human mind. He helps man through his daily providence, he helps each individual through the general human relations he has eſtablished. He helps

him through revelation, and helps him through that spiritual aid which he needs. The order of nature is not the narrow, contracted matter which it is sometimes described as being. Into the great circle of the Divine order, always natural to Him, even when miraculous to us, enter, not merely the few laws of the physical universe, but the great system of moral discipline, the revelations of Chriſt, and the aids of Heaven.

REVERENCE.

How beautiful it is in the child! You have seen one reading the hiſtory of some heroic and good man; some one who had lived and ſuffered for truth and right, and as the child read, his cheeks were fluſhed and his eyes filled with unconscious tears. All his nobleſt feelings are aroused. He would rather be the unknown follower of that righteous man in his failures than the leader of others in their success. For days after, you see the influence of that hour's reading, in a higher tone of thought. It is as if a freſh gale from the mountains had blown through his heart, sweeping out for the time its

mean and petty paſſions and aims. Bleſſed child, you say, if it never lose the disposition to look up, admiringly, lovingly, reverently, to that which is above itself. You pray that the paſſing emotion may become the habit of the soul, till it ſhall have a taste for the beauty and grandeur of virtue, such as the true artiſt has for the beauty and grandeur of the nobleſt ſtandards of art. For you know that what he looks up to in this spirit, he will insenſibly, according to the measure of his powers, become like. And you know that when he has ceased to look up, when he is disposed to see nothing higher or better than his own petty self, when reverence and its related sentiments are gone, their growth is ended, and moral paralysis, like a shadow, is creeping on.

More beautiful ſtill is it in age, when the emotions of youth, purified and elevated, have grown into an habitual, trusting, religious reverence for God. I do not here speak of it as a duty. One of its great privileges is that it preserves the youth of the heart. Without it, man has only the earth and the paſt. He looks downward and backward. If aught of early

life remain, it is its frivolity and not its freſhness—the fading morning without its dews and fragrance. But this reverence which looks upward, which in truſting dependence connects the soul with the higheſt goodness, is the beginning of the everlaſting life—of youth which is eternal. It opens, to receive the light, the whole moral nature of man. It lifts up the affections which otherwise must creep on the ground, as a tree in its growth each year lifts higher and higher the vines which have wound their tendrils around its branches, hanging out their leaves and clusters to rejoice in the air and the sun. So long as a loving reverence for superior worth remains, there is hope of the fraileſt and guiltieſt. His hand touches the altar. His feet, though it be on the loweſt round, is ſtill on the ladder by which the angels ascended to heaven.

ADVENT.

Collect.

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty, to judge both the living and dead, we may rise to the life immortal. And this we beg in the name of our Mediator; though whom we ascribe unto Thee all honour and glory, now and ever. Amen.

THE NEED OF A DIVINE REVELATION INCREASES WITH THE PROGRESS OF CIVILIZATION.

A SERMON FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Chriſt, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the luſts thereof. *Rom.* xiii. 14.

In entering upon that period of the year which calls our attention to the advent of Chriſt and the beneficent influence of his religion in paſt ages, it becomes us to consider it in its relation to the wants of our own time. The fundamental characteriſtic of the age, the source of many other characteriſtics, and fostered by what itself creates, is the immense and general activity of the intellect, and the direction of this activity to secular affairs. By the education of schools and the severer education of practical life, by individual freedom, by the multiplied and multiplying careers open

to the enterprifing and aspiring, by the poverty which rebels againſt its reſtrictions, by the luxury which would make the world tributary to its pleasures, by the prizes held out on every side to the clear mind and the energetic will, the general intellect is ſtimulated to an activity in secular pursuits such as the world never saw before. One of the results of this intellectual and secular activity is seen in the theory, that, in some inexplicable way, the advance of knowledge supersedes the neceſſity of revelation; that, in the growing light of civilization, Chriſtianity is less needed, that it is becoming obsolete, that it has been a good religion for rude ages, that it is good now for the ignorant, but that the intelligent and the cultivated may find, in the ſtudy of nature and the human heart, what answers their purposes quite as well and is more satisfactory.

The text, taken from the leſſon of the day, implies that, in putting on the Lord Jesus Chriſt, we are laying aſide what is low and sensual, and making proviſion for the higher faculties of our nature. The inference from this is, that in proportion to the culture of our

higher faculties will be our need of His religion and the extent of its influence over us.

The precise point, however, which I would urge, is this;—that the increased intellectual activity of the age, instead of diminiſhing, increases the need of an authoritative religious revelation, both in regard to the faith and practice of men.

1. I call attention to the general fact that every increase of faculty, though it increases power, involves also an increase of needs. The ſtone in the quarry has no needs whatsoever. The air folds it round about, the rains fall on it, the sunbeams glow and flame on its surface, but the rock remains impaſſive, needing none of them. The tree adds to dead matter the element of organizing life, and air, rain and sunſhine are eſſential to its exiſtence. With the added faculties of animal life come added and corresponding needs. In man there is a sudden and vaſt enlargement of faculty, but with it an equal multiplication of the points of dependence on what is external to himself. Man, the moſt powerful, is also the moſt dependent creature on earth. The general law

follows him into the spiritual life. The brute has neither hope nor fear for the morrow; but man is tortured by remorseful memories, is racked by anxieties, is at the mercy of hope and fear, lives a needy mendicant on human affections, his soul is awed by conscious relations with God, he recoils from the myſteries of the grave, and treads with trembling the borders of the eternal world. He is in the midſt of the vaſt agencies of Nature and of God, and by the very intelligence which raises him above the animal, is made conscious of his weakness and dependence. And now, going one step farther, I add, that the higher the culture, the greater the needs. The faculties of the savage are undeveloped, and his needs are few. He ſleeps life away in a kind of unconscious ſtupor, while, because of improved taſtes, of nicer moral perceptions and awakened senſibilities, the cultivated man's being throws out on every side its tender nerves to be thrilled by the leaſt touch of pleasure, or tortured by the invasion of pain. One might almoſt describe civilization as a condition of multiplied needs—phyſically, mentally, morally, a con-

dition of multiplied needs. It is no accident, but the merciful law of God, that the same civilization which develops individual power ſhall create the reſtraints of dependence and the humanizing influences of mutual needs. Thus culture invariably increases need. It awakens the sensibilities, it gives them a keener edge, it multiplies their demands, it carries a man out of himself, and connects his well-being with a conſtantly enlarging circle of influences external to himself—making him at the same time more self-subſiſtent and more dependent.

Leaving this general ſtatement for its particular applications, in the firſt place,

1. The advance of intelligence increases the need of that aſſurance in regard to religious *truth* which comes to us through an authoritative revelation. Increased mental activity, when applied to religion, has certain neceſſary results. It enlarges the number of religious queſtions, it measures their magnitude more juſtly, it requires greater definiteness of belief, and finally and above all, in order to believe, it exacts more decisive evidence. To an intelli-

gent mind, religious queſtions, concerning as they do man's relations to God and his own laſting welfare, are of neceſſity the moſt important of all. The active mind, unless utterly frivolous, can never be satisfied to have its inquiries ſhut up within the world of the senses. Grander and more solemn themes demand attention. In the great darkness, the eye ſtrains itself to see what is in the realm of the inviſible. What is the meaning of these vague apprehensions, these inſtinctive forelookings, which overleap the barrier of time, and compel me to speculate on the great problems of man's exiſtence? Is there a God? What is this myſtery of death? Does the moral order of the world culminate and complete itself in a righteous retribution? Is there any safe guide through these bewildering mazes of fear, and hope, and doubt? An ignorant age is satisfied with answers which do not satisfy an intelligent age. Take, for example, the doctrine of a future life. An unthinking age accepts without queſtion the traditional faith. It dwells more amidſt the inſtinctive sentiments and tendencies, and finds them sufficient. But an intelli-

gent age queſtions. What evidence that man lives hereafter? We are referred to two claſſes of proof. Firſt, to the analogies of Nature—to the seed that breaks forth into the plant, to the succeſſive developments in animal life, to the general moral order of the world, and the reason for suppoſing a doctrine to be true which seems neceſſary to the completeness of that order. But while such analogies suggeſt, illuſtrate, fortify one's faith in a future life, they do not prove its reality. Secondly, we are referred to the human consciousness. But to say that we are conscious of immortality is to use words without meaning. To adopt an idea well put by one of our brethren, we are conscious of thoughts, of feelings, of what transpires within us, but we are no more conscious of a future fact, of what ſhall take place beyond the grave, than we are of what is now taking place on the other side of the globe. There is but one conceivable way in which we can have any sufficient and reliable aſſurance of a future life, and that is through revelation. The very intelligence which makes the importance of the queſtion more deeply felt, makes

the revelation from above more eſſential. In the midnight of the world, the ſoul cries out for light; and to meet this greateſt of all needs, behold! beyond the horizon of this world riſes the Sun of Righteousness.

We overrate the range of the intellect, and mistake its sphere. To expect of it, because of its enlarged activity in its appropriate sphere, a corresponding power to discern truths beyond its sphere, is to expect of the microscope the discoveries of the telescope. The higheſt cultivation of the mere intellect scarcely carries one, so far as the knowledge of the future world is concerned, beyond the poſition of a child. A knowledge of mathematics helps us to define the poſition of the ſtars, but throws not one ray of light on the queſtion of a righteous retribution. A life's ſtudy of political economy does not enable one to say with a particle more of aſſurance whether the penitent may hope for forgiveness. The torchlight of logic is not sufficient to illuminate the eternal world. And the increase of intelligence, in making us more conscious of the need of religious truth, inſtead of superseding Chriſtianity,

makes it, as an authoritative revelation, more and more eſſential to mankind.

2. This is equally true on practical grounds. Greater mental activity manifeſts itself in a greater activity in all the affairs of life; and this creates the need of a clearer moral guidance. What an infinite variety of moral questions is every man of business obliged to settle for himself every day. Every project, every method of carrying out his enterprises, every dealing with his neighbors, involves some question of right and wrong. The very preſſure of his cares and the magnitude of his duties makes it eſſential that he ſhould have clear, definite, and settled principles of conduct. Dreamy and myſtical sentimentalisms do not meet his wants. The growing and engroſſing activity of the world requires the guidance of *laws*, which do not merely suggeſt, but which speak with *authority*, which do not admit of parleying with the paſſions;—and such laws can have an unqueſtioned authority only as they are the acknowledged expreſſion of His will who is the moral Ruler and Judge of man.

3. This increased mental activity, increases

the need of a personal attention to religion. This would be true, were it only to preserve the balance of man's nature. The moſt melancholy condition of society is not one in which ignorance prevails, but one of great intellectual activity unsoftened and unguided by religious faith. It is the surrender of man up to all sensual, selfiſh, and cruel inſtincts and intereſts; for the intellect is only an inſtrument; if not subjected to moral and religious principle, it will be used by the paſſions, and thus the moſt dangerous men have been men of great intellectual activity without any controlling faith in duty or God. Add intellect to the animal, and it is what man would be without moral and religious principle—a moral Frankenſtein—an enlarging brain and a contracting heart—powerful for mischief and regardless of good.

Amidſt so many claims and preoccupations, if religion is attended to at all, it muſt be from a personal choice. The immense outward activity of a highly civilized age, is unfavorable to devotion, because it preoccupies the mind. For a mind not preoccupied, nature and life have many serious appeals which suggeſt the idea of

duty, of God, and of futurity. Mountain and ſky and sea proclaim Him whose presence moves over the universe. Sickness and death utter their monitory voices, and the impreſſions made by the great miniſtries of Providence fill as large a proportional space in the mind as they do in the life. The patriarchal shepherd on his Eaſtern plains was untaught, but his heart, comparatively free from preoccupation, was more open to the religious aspects of the world. The voice of God was in the thunder; —the rainbow, built by no mortal hands, spoke of the divine benignity; and death, which broke into the narrow circle of companionſhip, was an epoch in his uneventful hiſtory. In his poverty, he ſlept on the ground, but he saw the ſtars rise and the ſtars set, and all the peaceful ongoings of the heavens. And thus these primitive times were characterized by a tendency to religious thought. But civilization, with its fevered paſſions, its inceſſant toils, its conflicting intereſts, is occupied with the earth, and is diſtracted from the more remote and gentle voices of Providence. It builds a vaſt palace, it rears its walls on solid foundations, makes it

glorious with tower and dome, and fills it with the luxuries of all lands, but when it lies down to reſt, there is no opening in the arched roof through which it beholds the ſtars. The work of its own hand, the dwelling which itself has made and rejoices in, ſhuts out the vision of the heavens. When the patriarch in the ſolitude of the plains made the ſtone his pillow, in the midſt of the vaſt ſurrounding nature, alone and helpless, under the overaching ſky, we do not wonder that to his dreams there ſhould come a vision of ascending and descending angels, nor that on awakening he ſhould have said, with awe-ſtruck heart, surely God is in this place. But our more ſtrenuous activity in worldly affairs, ſhuts out these more simple and natural religious influences. The voices of Providence find men preoccupied—the scholar with his books—the merchant with his merchandise—the man of science with the laws of material nature—the ſtatesman with the laws of society—everywhere, preoccupation. If, under such circumſtances, religion is to have any reſtraining and guiding power, it will rule, not by accident, but muſt be enthroned by the voluntary

choice over the mind. The greater the attention to other things, the more neceſſity of a voluntary attention to religion. Who needs to pray for God's guidance and help, if it be not the man employed from morning till night on affairs and projects, every one of which involves some queſtion of duty, who lives amidſt urgent temptations, whose whole life is a battle, who ſleeps in his armour, and dreams of the conflicts of the day?

But I am so busy that I have no time to meditate or pray. This expreſſes precisely the tendency I am describing. Let the unoccupied, it is said, meditate and pray—let the sick pray—let the dying pray—but I have no time for it.

If this be true, it does not diminiſh the need of religion, but is only a confeſſion of the power of the world. A mind thus preoccupied, will never, except from a deciſive personal choice, seek the help which cometh from above. Beset by calls and claims, clamorously demanding attention, some of them must be, or will be, poſtponed to others. For example, it muſt be a matter of choice if you read the Bible, if you hallow the new day with prayer,

or rush with a prayerless heart into the world. The activity of an intelligent mind carries man beyond the paſſive, quiet, receptive ſtate, and he will have no more religion than he chooses to have. God may work with him, but to him the qualification is emphatically true, that he muſt ſtill work out his own salvation with fear and trembling.

4. The character of the times demands a more careful and thorough syſtem of religious inſtruction for the young. I do not mean that religion is more important in one age than another, nor to one person than another; nor do I have in my mind the neceſſity equally eſſential at all times of awakening and training aright the religious sentiment; but rather the neceſſity of inſtructing the young in the evidences, the doctrines, the duties, and the hiſtory of our faith. The need of this increases with the general intelligence, and among others for two reasons:

1. When mind is free and active it will bring all subjects boldly within the sphere of its inquiries. And a subject of such primary importance as Chriſtianity cannot fail to awaken

conſtant diſcuſſion. But juſt in proportion to the amount of diſcuſſion,—being such as it commonly is,—there is need of a previous knowledge of what Chriſtianity claims to be, and of what it teaches. The moſt common skepticism is that which is occaſioned by hearing doubts proposed, while one is too ignorant to underſtand their real force or merits, and too busy to give them any real examination. A young man juſt entering life hears some trivial cavil reſpecting some fact in the new Teſtament hiſtory. He cannot reply to it, he is too much occupied to inveſtigate the subject, he does not underſtand its importance, and it remains in his mind ever after, an unanswered cavil. It is like a slight crack in a cryſtal vase, inſignificant, and yet the value of the vase is ruined. He knows so little, that he fancies that every thing in the Gospels may be equally open to suspicion. A thin, chill miſt of doubt spreads over the whole subject of religion. He does not disbelieve, and yet he does not believe. Thus, owing to his ignorance, a single cavil may interpose itself between Chriſtianity and his mind, like a screen, so thin as hardly to be

visible, and yet able to intercept the warmth of a fire. Had this young man received in early life proper inſtruction, he would perhaps have underſtood the groundleſſneſs of the cavil, or at any rate would have seen that it did not affect the subſtantial authority of the religion. Thus the intellectual activity which ſtimulates speculation and every form of loose discuſſion, requires a knowledge of certain general facts, to prevent that speculation from being the source of conſtant error. Such knowledge will be gained by few after they enter active life; and certainly, by very few, unless a foundation has been laid for it in early life.

2. It is eſſential, in order that some sense of the relation of religion, and its proportionate importance to other subjects, may not be loſt. In our ſtate of civilization, each individual is obliged to confine himself very much to some single department of activity. With our limited faculties, what we give little attention to will seem of little importance. The increase of intelligence gives a peculiar form to the evil. A youth is carefully educated in certain departments of literature and science, and prepared

for some special vocation in life. Other subjects fade away into the remote distance and sink into insignificance. His interests, his enthusiasm, his hopes and fears, are aggregated around the objects to which he has given his thoughts. It rises a vast mountain in the midst of a plain. The mind will hold but a certain amount, and being filled up with secular interests, by a kind of mechanical pressure excludes religious interests. Many become skeptical not through thought, but by this mechanical exclusion of religion from the mind. Being out of the mind, it seems to have no real existence; to be a mere illusion. The very circumstance that one is educated in other departments thus makes it more essential that the young should receive a corresponding religious culture.

The activity of the times increases the importance of religious rites, and forms, and institutions. The awakened mind may in some respects be more self-dependent; but it is also more sensitive to external influences. Intelligence does not make men less worldly, it only substitutes for the gross forms of worldliness one more intellectual, but not less tyrannical

and dangerous. Among our people so engroſſed, so intensely occupied with what is juſt around, the thousand voices of the world calling them this way and that, what would be the fate of religion, if no outward voice or inſtitution ever reminded them of her authority? For him who lives in retirement, and spends his days in meditation and amidſt tranquil and unurging duties, the groves may answer for his temple, and all days to him may be sabbaths. But he whose life is engroſſed by worldly cares and labors, who is whirled round in a maelstrom of ceaseless excitements,—woe unto him if there be nothing but his own heart to recall the thought of eternity and of God. Above all men, he needs that the Sabbath should break across the monotony of his labors; that the church ſhould confront him in the ſtreet; that the Bible ſhould lie on his table; that the bells ſhould summon him to worſhip; and that the world without ſhould in some part at leaſt be dedicated to religion and her offices.

I have thus presented some of the reasons, on account of which the greater attention given to education, and the greater activity in secular

affairs, make the need greater of the teachings of Chriſtianity, and of a voluntary subjection to it in the practical life. Education divorced from religion is power without corresponding guidance. Without it, civilization has in itself the elements of its decay. It inflames the paſſions, it multiplies pleasures, it ſtimulates desires, it puts ſharpened swords into the hands of men, and if while doing this it does not inſtal a more sacred law above itself, and does not give to it a willing obedience, the very bleſſings we moſt prize become the peril and ruin of man. We are like gueſts at a poisoned feſtival. The garlands drop deadly dews, the lights are sepulchral, the wilder the joy the more certain the doom, and when the portals are thrown open for their departure, it is to enter darkness and the grave.

And while the need of what I have spoken is recognized in the whole hiſtory of man, it has been felt moſt deeply by the moſt thoughtful, and by them in their moſt thoughtful hours. Not the frivolous, the base, and the ignorant, but the nobleſt minds of antiquity were the ones moſt weighed down by the solemn burden of

these problems of human duty and deſtiny. All ancient philosophy is a sad groping through infinite and baffling myſteries for those truths which are vouchsafed to the humbleſt Chriſtian believer. However unfaithful in the practical life, it seems as if the moment that minds of the higheſt order addreſſed themselves to their moſt serious taſks, they rose into the region of religious ideas. The greateſt works of genius, though not dedicated to religion, in a vaſt proportion of cases catch their beſt illumination from the ſide-lights of faith. The self-consecration of Milton—the scholar's prayer, as humble as a child's, of Bacon—the blended science and piety of Newton, are revelations of the soul's great need. And that need, felt moſt in their moſt inspired hours of thought, is disclosed by the culture which makes one aware of the limits of human intelligence, and of the realm beyond, from which no light comes save that which is divine.

MEANS OF CHRISTIAN CULTURE.

I do not attempt to enumerate the varied means which, in a Chriſtian land, and because of the Advent of Chriſt, are adapted to promote a religious life. But by the mercy of Providence they attend us, a gracious companionſhip, from birth to death. The hymns that a mother taught, the Scriptures read from childhood, not only the influences of nature and the promptings of the human heart, not only the rising and setting day, the glory of the ſtars and the beauty of the earth, but, that which gives meaning to nature, the revelations of Chriſt, and all the offices that give utterance to religious emotion, the baptism of children, the memorials of Chriſt, the churches that confront the routine of daily care and gather men within their precincts for worſhip, the words of promise which we utter as the dead are borne to the grave, the recorded lives and thoughts of good men, the benedictions of the bridal, the prayers

of those that part, and the thanksgivings of those that meet, these are all promoting in the soul religious faith and principle.

A CHRISTIAN HOME.

And why lingers such a sacredness about the memory of a religious home? Because it was consecrated by religion. Because there the social affections and religious faith grew up together. There the love of the parent became an interpreter of the character of God. There the child learned to believe and adore,—kneeling by a mother's knee it learned to look up with confiding truſt to infinite Love,—to see in all above and around the manifeſtations of an indulgent Parent. In the religious child's pure conceptions, before the imagination is bound to the earth, and the mind dwarfed and burdened and blinded by earthly cares, everything aſſumes something of the character and purity of infinity. Time and eternity, earth and Heaven, man and God meet nigh together in its thoughts, and blend together to inveſt

his home with holy aſſociations. And hence it is, that in after years, when cares and sins have darkened above the valley of life, that firſt home seems a midway ſtep between earth and Heaven,—a summit raised high above the clouds, where a heavenly radiance lingers and the feet of angels tread.

When the young man is caſt into new temptations, as thousands are, and the words of the scoffer aſſail his faith, and the seductions of the corrupt loosen his principles, and innocence is gone, and the friendſhip of the virtuous is gone, and truſt in God gone,—as he goes down the dark pathway of ſhame and sin, what ſtill holds him back as he ſtands on the brink, and keeps him from plunging into the gulf? It is the power and the spell laid on his childhood's heart in his early home. His dead parents speak to him from their graves. Their ſilent lips have a living language for him. Though like the prodigal, he has wandered from his home, and trampled on its early leſſons, he cannot forget them. In the pauses of frivolity and sin, the tones of parental solicitude, their words of fond and solemn warnings rise on his soul

and will be heard. The years between vaniſh away,—the world about vaniſhes away,—his early home rises out of the paſt,—the tree that ſhaded it, the hills that environed it, the ſkies that looked down on it. The very graves give up their dead—parent, brother, ſiſter—to people it. He is a child again. Again he hears the affectionate counsels whose neglect has been his ruin. He kneels again in the circle of affection, and hears the words of devotion, and the God whom his parents honored seems near to him, and the hardened sinner is melted, till it seems as if the prayers that went up to Heaven from the heart of childhood, had fallen like the dew again from Heaven upon his manhood's heart, to soften and to ſtrengthen.

THE BIBLE.

A Bible, now worn and defaced, has descended as an heirloom in your family. You can remember how, on the Sabbath evenings, you were taught from it your firſt religious leſſons. The venerable forms of those who

inſtructed you are now gone to their reward, and this book is transmitted to you. You may easily buy a coſtlier and richer volume, one that ſhall contain the same truths and the same words, but to you it is not the same book. The Bible you have inherited is all covered over with memories. The aſſociations of a century lie within its ſtained pages. The dead sit by as you read it. It is not mere words you read,—they are repeated by the voices of those now in heaven. To others it may be nothing, but to you, even while it lies unopened on your table, it is a connecting bond between you and years long gone. It recalls those whom you loved and honored, in the way that you beſt love to remember them. It speaks of your own early years, when the heart was purer perhaps, when the soul was less worldly, and the thoughts rose to heaven on lighter wings; and though sad and reproaching to memory, it is sacred, it brings before you the good examples you have known in times long paſt, it is aſſociated with your beſt thoughts, and purposes, and affections; and therefore it is that gold could not buy this volume from you; and for

like reasons your children ſhall cheriſh it when you are no more.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF FOLLOWING CHRIST.

The theory of virtue which ſeems to belong to our northern climate, is, that there is but one kind, that of ſtruggle, conflict and conqueſt of ſin through force of will. On the contrary, the forms of virtue, and the methods of reaching a Chriſtian character, are as various as are the trees of the foreſt, or the features of men. One has vehement paſſions, an energetic nature, born for ſtruggle, and miserable if it hath not difficulties to overcome. This man ſtands front to front with a temptation, and reſiſts and conquers it as a foe. He rules his appetites and paſſions. He says, thus and so God requires, and I will do it. He will be juſt, he will be true, he will not yield to the temptations that beset him. Life is a conflict, and with a resolute will, as in a battle, he takes his ſtand on the Lord's side. The virtues which this man attains are the virtues of the will, and they

are admirable. But, after all, they conſtitute only one ſtyle of virtue, and it is the ſtyle which belongs to such a conſtituted character. Let no one fancy that it is the only kind. On the contrary, there are gentle, unforceful natures, whose natural characteriſtic is a loving, truſting, affectionate temper. They have no great violence of paſſion, and no great force of will. Their Creator never meant them for conflict. They grow up as the flowers grow, as delicate and as beautiful; they require shelter and protection, but they grow year by year, not like the oak, but like some tree of the garden, which, in spite of its delicacy, may be of more worth than all its ſtronger neighbors. Children sit under its ſhade, and gather from its branches the moſt precious fruits. It is a kind of natural goodness. The element of moral growth in such a person is not a rightly directed will, but rightly directed affections. Such a character loves, and becomes like what it loves. The will is the mere servant of the love. Such a one is scarce conscious of any intentional goodness, but love ſtands in the place of will. Without knowing it, it repels temptation, and

throws off the ſtains of life, and bears trials, and, without knowing it, acquiesces in sacrifices from which the more energetic character ſhrinks aghaſt, or to which it entirely succumbs. Paul's virtue was the virtue of the will. The virtue of John was that of love. One might fancy that he never thought of reſiſting a temptation, and never knew aught of those struggles which give their character to the writings of Paul. He loved his Master, and could die for him, hardly thinking whether it were right or wrong, but only whether it were what would please his Lord. They both reached the same point of fidelity, but by different roads. Which of these characters is highest and best, I know not. They are both good. Each is good of its kind, but they are different, and not to be compared. Each may be the true perfection of him who poſſeſſes it. Each may attain to the same loyalty to heaven. And so I might describe other forms of character. It is a wretched mistake, this attempt to ſhape all persons on one model, and by our artificial rules, to break down the natural differences, not of principle, but of form, with which

God intended to have this human world diverſified.

Now, what I would urge is this.—Do not be discouraged because you cannot have the same type of character which another may have. You may not have the energetic, enterpriſing virtues of one man, you may be quite incapable of the hardihood or ſtoical inſenſibility under trial of another man. Probably you were not intended to be so. You were intended to serve God in another way. Be satisfied with being faithful, only be faithful in accordance with that nature which God has given you. I offer no apology for unfaithfulness, but what I say is, if you are faithful, do not be discouraged because the superficial form which your fidelity takes is not the same with that of your neighbors. It is better for them, and better for you, that you are unlike.

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

Often, doubtless, many frivolous or irreverent or preoccupied hearts enter the sanctuary, and leave it, without profit. But when I pass

by these churches, silent and unconspicuous though they be, built up and ſtanding from year to year amidst this busy mart, surrounded by places of traffic, by all worldly excitements, and by too many centres of moral corruption, in crowded ſtreets from which the towering warehouses almost ſhut out the light of the ſky and all the bleſſed influences of nature, and when I remember how many good thoughts have had their origin in those places of worship, how many paſſions have there been calmed, how many have there learned to look with more kindness on their neighbors, to judge more justly of life and its interests, and to think more reverently of God, how many sorrows have there been soothed, how many ſlumbering good purposes revived, how many truths more seriously meditated, how many hearts made both wiser and better, I say, bleſſed are they that go up to worſhip in the temple of our God. It is a place of good influences, and well may we say, as they of old,—"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors; and be ye thrown open, O our hearts, that the King of Glory may come in!"

CHRISTMAS.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD.

Collect.

Almighty God, who hast given us thine only begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a virgin; grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit. And this we beg in the name of Jesus Christ, through whom we ascribe unto Thee all honor and glory, now and ever. Amen.

THE OBSERVANCE OF CHRISTMAS.

We are apt to speak as if all we learned came from the voice of man or the written word. But it is not so. Days, seasons, commemorative offices, often teach more than the words on the printed page. If we observe it as we ought, this day ſhould impress on us the holiest leſſons of religion; for of what does it speak? Number over your chief bleſſings in heart or hope, in home or society, and there is not one, of which you must not say, for all that is best in this, for all that crowns and glorifies it, we are indebted to the coming of Christ. Then think of the wide and beneficent power which has spread from him over the world. Think of the sins which he has checked. Think of the penitence in so many frail hearts which he has awakened. Think of the myriads of young children, from whom Jesus Christ has

driven away the phantom forms of evil, and into whose opening and innocent minds he has put bleſſed thoughts of God. Think of the aged, to whom he has given peace. Think of the affections which, in millions of homes, he has either awakened, or has hallowed, and by hallowing them, given to them an immortal life. Think of the heroic purposes which date back to him. Think of the forbearing and forgiving thoughts which his example compels the worſt of us to honor, even if we do not imitate. Think of the new order of the world which begun with him, of the higher sense of responſibility, of the more humane sentiments breathed into the relations of men, of the better progress which his religion firſt inspires, and then guides; and acknowledge that the day of his coming was the central day of human hiſtory. I would find a symbol of its universal power for good in its simpleſt manifeſtations. The day returns to us amidſt the cold and froſt and snows of winter, when nature lies weary and dead, and yet, while the winter ſtorms beat on the windows, if within the dwelling there be those affections which Chriſt came to awaken,

there is joy and gladness, and a psalm of thanksgiving that rises above the clouds. In how many homes, on this cold and wintry earth, does Christ this day light up the very summer time of the affections.

THE SONG OF THE ANGELS.

A SERMON FOR CHRISTMAS.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hoſt, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth peace, good will toward men. *Luke* ii. 13, 14.

WHAT we have moſt to fear in the religious observance of this day is, that it ſhould come to be a mere perfunctory and formal observance. It is good that it should be observed as a holiday, a season for the meeting of families, of kindred and friends, a day made bright by the happy faces of children, by mutual offices of kindness, by ministries to the poor and the wretched, by deeds and by enjoyments which bind the children of men together in pleasant

bonds. All this is well. These warmer affections ſhall make a summer of the heart through this wintry season. All this is well; but it is not the firſt thing. The day is firſt of all a religious day, and, what is more, its social and domeſtic benefits are dependent on its being observed as a religious day. Without this, for a time a failing twilight of good influences might remain; but let it be entirely diſſevered from religious aſſociations and memories, and those friendly and family benefits for which we value it, would nearly all disappear. It seems as if there were something in our nature which rendered it neceſſary that even our pleasures, in order that they may be healthful to the affections, ſhould in some way or other be rooted in religion. The friendſhips of men, as they become close and true, in their intimacies and confidences, rise up into the region of religion, and an hour's communion and confidence, hallowed by religion, has brought them nearer to each other than years of pleasure without it. It is not merely the enjoyments of home which have moſt endeared it, but the memory of enjoyments, blended with religious emotions.

The family brought together on the Sabbath evening, the influences of the day ſtill lingering about the minds of all, the hours ſpent by children around a mother's knee, the twilight made musical by the blending of gentle and loving voices, running unconsciously through the whole diapason of human experience from infant pleasures up to immortal faith, till earth and heaven come near together in this sweet anthem of the affections,—it is to pleasures like these that men look back, as the ones which bind them moſt closely to their homes and their kindred. I know not how it is; but pleasures which are thoroughly diſſociated from religion, pleasures conceived and enjoyed, I mean, in a ſpirit alien to religion, in the same degree seem to become earthly and ſelfiſh, and to do more to provoke jealous rivalries than to unite in self-denying love. Take the element of religious faith out of men's minds, and their pleasures would be the worſt source of ſelfiſhness, debasement, and ſtrife. It is the presence of these great moral ideas above us, which, though we may be heedless of it, gives dignity and joy and beauty to the pleasures of this mortal life,

juſt as it is to the sun in the heavens that we owe the beauty of this earthly scene, the color and the form, the light and the ſhade, the glory kindling from cloud to cloud, which heralds the morning, and the fading splendors of the ſinking day.

If we regarded then this day only as a season for home and kindred and social enjoyments, it muſt be a religious day. Let all cease to observe it as a religious day, ı t the churches be closed, and the bells ſleep in their towers, and the atmosphere be dispoſſeſſed of those religious thoughts which float in it and are breathed by those who do not acknowledge it, and the day itself would soon cease to be observed. It would be delivered over to the sovereignty of mammon, or would be a day of pleasures, whose return all wise men would fear.

And yet, to make it a religious day, it is not enough to say that it shall be set apart as such. It can be made so, not by an outward form alone, but by having in our minds a profound and living sense of the benefits which it commemorates. And here lies our great difficulty. We are accuſtomed to the idea of Chriſt's mis-

ſion as we are to the riſing of the sun, and yielding to the benumbing power of cuſtom, they both cease to awaken that wonder and awe and gratitude which it would seem they muſt awaken. Then we look at Chriſt's miſſion and mediation entirely from this our human ſide. We look up as men do at a cloud, whose dark and meaningless folds ſhut down upon the earth, and ſhut out the light above. We look at it as a fact in hiſtory, we enclose it within our dry logical formulas, we narrow it down within the circle of our small earthly conceptions. We treat it as an event in human annals, and forget that it was the great manifeſtation of God.

Men were not the only beings concerned in that event which we commemorate. There were thoughts in heaven, which, like sunbeams, sought the earth. It was not that the earth held a larger place in the Creator's regards than any other part of his works, but then and there He saw fit to reveal himself in a more glorious way to man. Men were not the only beings concerned in that event. The Almighty Providence, throned in inacceſſible peace, was moved

with compaſſion. The angels bowed with devout gratitude before that love which ſtooped from heaven to seek out the guilty upon the earth.

The sublimity of that great poem which treats "of man's firſt disobedience," lies not in its mere descriptions of earth, or heaven, or hell, but that He, whose mortal eyes the "clouds and ever-during dark surrounded," his "mind, through all her powers irradiate," rose above our earthly conceptions, and saw in the miſſion of Chriſt, not merely a fact in human hiſtory, but a manifeſtation of the Almighty Providence —God moved to rescue man—the great heavens above us and around us holding in their sympathies the feeble creatures of the earth! Amidſt the hierarchy of heavenly powers, the God of all looks for one who ſhall descend, and through mortal suffering rescue man from guilt and peril.

"'Say, heavenly powers, where shall we find such love?
Which of ye will be mortal to redeem
Man's mortal crime, and juſt th' unjuſt to save?
Dwells in all heaven charity so dear?'
He aſked, but all the heavenly choirs ſtood mute,
And silence was in heaven."

And then, one, he who was nearest the Father's throne, ſtood forth ready to perform the miſſion of love. And when his words were ended,

"His meek aspect
Silent yet spake, and breathed immortal love
To mortal men, above which only shone
Filial obedience; as a sacrifice
Glad to be offered, he attends the will
Of his great Father."

As they beheld this offering of himself,

"All
The multitude of angels, with a shout
Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
As from bleſt voices, uttering joy, heaven rung
With jubilee, and loud hosannas filled
The eternal regions."

More sublime than this, from its very ſimplicity, is the narrative of the Evangeliſt. On that night Judea ſlept as the world now ſleeps, heedless of the heavenly influences which overhang the children of men. The innocent ſlept, the toilworn ſlept, guilt ſlept within its concealments; half seen by its failing watch-fires, war ſlept, dim-tented in the dark. "At that time

there were in the same country ſhepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord ſhone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hoſt, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." The echoes of that song have floated down through the intervening ages to us. May we dare to lift up our minds to the height of its great argument? There was joy among the bleſſed spirits of heaven. What the wiseſt of the earth so little underſtood, was seen by them in its true magnitude. And how was this event regarded by them? Borne through the universe the angels saw this dark orb made more dark by human ſin and wretchedness. They saw beings who had ceased to deserve the Creator's favor, and yet they saw the infi-

nite Love put forth to bless the thankless and undeserving. It was not upon the human ſide of this event that they chiefly looked; but they saw in it a manifestation of the mercy and compaſſion and love of Him who is over all, a ſhining forth of love on this dark earth, and their song fitly began with God. "Glory to God in the highest," glory to Him who hath compaſſion on man, glory to Him who sendeth One to lead man into the ways of peace and love.

What the earth then was—and what it is—the ignorance, the moral debasement of its inhabitants—the spiritual darkness that rested on the children of men, we know well enough. This narrative lifts up our thoughts, and seems to give us a glimpse of the way in which the earth is regarded by the inhabitants of a holier sphere. We feel for the moment that there are other spectators than those our mortal eyes look upon. And seeing how they regarded the coming of the Saviour to this world, most miserable because unconscious of its needs, we seem to have a more juſt view of the true meaning of his miſſion. Who ſhall wonder that the descent of the mercy of heaven was

heralded by the song of angels. What wonder that when the brighteſt manifeſtation of heaven was revealed, some attendant glories, like the splendors of the rising sun, waited on His coming.

Beings of a higher world looked down upon the Saviour's coming. They beheld his ministry of love, and in the hour of his agony they were at his side. Can we doubt that they ſtill regard with intereſt those whom he ſtrove to bless? What then ſhall be the judgment of heaven on the deeds witneſſed upon the earth? How to heavenly eyes appear the wars and fightings which mock the mercy of Heaven—the armies sending terror before, and leaving behind a trail of blood and desolation—the oppreſſions which make the earth groan—the fetters which the love of gain and the love of power rivet on the weak—the sins which reign in the world and take up their abode in the heart? They sang of peace and good-will. Still they behold with joy all signs of the progress of the Saviour's kingdom. When charity seeks out the wretched, they walk unseen by her side. When justice and mercy would raise

men from their wretchedness, there are holy witneſſes of their labors. In the home, where gentle affections bind the living together, and a holy faith binds all to the infinite Father, with the hymn of these united hearts blends the song of the angels.

Nor has that manifeſtation of God's love been powerless. It introduced a new element of moral life into the world. From that high elevation have flowed down into the valley of human life faiths and sentiments, whose origin is higher than the speculations of our minds. The world is different and is better in its thoughts, beliefs, affections, and actions because Chriſt lived in it. The dawn has risen slowly and has been obscured by clouds and ſtorms. But it is the dawn, and it brightens onward towards the day.

The significance of the event which we commemorate, lies in the fact especially that it is a manifeſtation of God, that in the coming of Chriſt, God's mercy and love were revealed as no words could reveal them to the children of men, and as such it meets our great spiritual needs. What is our great spiritual want? Is

it not precisely this—the want of any prevailing sense of the overruling Providence and love of God? We are unconscious how we ſhut ourselves up to the earth. Like drops in a ſtream, like ſhips sailing on parallel lines at sea, we move together, and are hardly aware that we move at all. The objects which occupy us, the intereſts which engross us, are of the earth. Our habits of thought, our science, our hiſtory of the paſt, our plans for the future, our ambitions and vanities and anxieties are closed in and bounded by a narrow earthly horizon. We become so low and confined in our conceptions, so Chinese in spirit, that of all the universe, the day and the spot where we live, and the intereſts of the paſſing time, become to us all in all. Our worldly wisdom is permitted to be our degradation. After science has abjured such errors, we bring down into our moral conceptions the idea of those aſtronomers who made the earth the centre of the universe. And thus often what paſſes for ſkepticism is not the result of any process of logic, but a fading from the mind, as a prevailing power and presence, of the idea of God.

And here we may see the mercy of God, in making these visible manifeſtations of himself. We are told, that if we have moral truth communicated to us, it matters not as to its source, that the teachings of the gospel are juſt as valuable without as with that atmosphere of miracle in which they are enveloped. It is a miſtake founded on an entire misconception of the wants of man. It is not that truth would be less true, or that miracle proves a truth, but that the miracle is itself a revelation of a truth of the higheſt magnitude. We need the miracle, not to prove some unrelated proposition, but for the truth which itself directly teaches. Shut up in this world, becoming unmindful of what is above us, the firſt of all human needs is, to be aroused from this earthly sleep, to be made conscious that there is a power above us, on whom we depend, and whom we are bound to obey. To meet this great need, from time to time, God has revealed himself, not through phrases intelligible to the wise, but in a way intelligible to all, and commanding the attention of all. We need not only to have the truth revealed, but revealed in a way that ſhall com-

mand attention. It is as in other things. While the electric fluid moves evenly and equally, though it fill earth and heaven, and be the element of life, we hardly observe it. But let it roll in thunder over the clouds, or leap in lightnings across the gulfs between, and the world looks and liſtens. The mode of manifeſtation commands attention. So God has revealed himself not only through his ordinary Providence, but in other ways so as to command our thoughts. As if for a moment the veil of the Temple had been rent, he has broken through that order of the world, behind which he withdraws himself from human gaze, and has revealed himself in front of his works, revealed himself the God of that order and the God of all.

Thus the greateſt truth in the gospel is taught through miracle itself. The mere fact of one such interposition is a revelation, such as could in no other way be made of the Divine providence and love. And the greateſt of all miracles is the sending of his Son. Well might the angels, who rejoice over a single sinner that repents, look on this great event

with joy and thanksgiving. I would not forget one of those miracles, which, to human eyes, have brought earth and heaven nearer together. On this guilty earth, covered with wrong and ravage and blood, we will remember that there are some spots which have been hallowed by a heavenly presence, some mountain summits, around which ſtill lingers the radiance of a Divine manifestation. Let them ſtand forever, silent witnesses that God has not forsaken the earth. Let this day remain forever a remembrancer of Divine love.

To-day we, my friends, leave this place for comfortable homes, for tables crowned with the bleſſings of God's providence, for family gatherings where the affections find a genial climate, and where they may freely put forth without fear of defeat or blight. The morning has been uſhered in by welcoming good wiſhes, and the night will go out amidſt domeſtic rejoicings. Nor ought it to be otherwise. Enjoy God's gifts, and be thankful while you enjoy. Make a summer for the heart in this winter of the year. But while we are in this place, let us pause on the memorials and the truths which

ſhall hallow these enjoyments. Let it not be your guilt to receive with a grasping hand, to enjoy with a thankless heart. As you look around your homes, consider how much of all that is best there you owe to His coming whom we this day commemorate. The home does not conſist of the hearth-stone and of the walls; but the affections which bind its inmates together, the self-denying spirit with which they help each other to bear the trials of life, the gentle and loving sympathies, the united hopes, these make the home. And what evils which threaten these would not Chriſtianity restrain and hinder, and what one of these bleſſings does it not crown with a new light? The affections themselves—it has transformed them from mere inſtincts, and imbued them with an immortal element. A Chriſtian home is a new creation on the earth. Take out of it all that Chriſt has done for its affections, its principles, and its hopes, and though all its luxuries might remain, what a dreary poverty would be left behind! This day, as you look on your little children, it is your privilege to remember Him who when on earth bleſſed such little ones as these, and

who teaches you that they are not forgotten, but that their angels behold the face of our Father in heaven. Some of your number this day will be absent upon the seas, in foreign lands, amidſt perils where your protection cannot reach; but your mutual thoughts, traverſing the globe, ſhall meet and cross each other. You will utter the same prayers, and you know that the Providence which is over you is over them. And that you can thus think, you owe to Jesus Chriſt. There are those in your homes, it may be, bowed down with infirmity and sickness. It may be the laſt time they ſhall join with you in these grateful rejoicings; but they ſtill can rejoice with you and you with them; for they and you through Chriſt have hopes which reach beyond the grave. There are vacant places which cannot be filled, and voices which none else may hear, but whose loving tones you will never cease to hear sounding through the lonely chambers of the heart. But you are permitted to hear also another voice. As in imagination you visit the grave, that voice comes to you which has come to myriads of mourners, saying, I am the Resur-

rection and the Life. As you think of these things while you are enjoying the bleſſings of your earthly lot, your thoughts cannot fail to rise in thanksgivings to Him who has poured in the light of a heavenly hope upon this mortal lot. And while you give thanks for what you enjoy, let the thanksgiving of the heart become the mercy of the hand. Honor Chriſt's coming, not by mere words, but by merciful deeds. Let some poor person be less wretched, some lonely person less solitary this day because of you. Spread not the feast for your rich neighbors only, but let those whom the world forgets be remembered. Honor the day by kind acts and merciful thoughts. Honor it by the forgiving of enemies, by the removing of causes of alienation, and ſtrife, and unkindness. Honor it by whatever promotes peace, and kind judgments, and friendly bonds between God's children. Honor it by those deeds which ſhow that it is not in words alone, but in spirit and in truth that you join in the angels' song of Glory to God, and good-will among men. Let the reign of love and peace and good-will be eſtabliſhed in your hearts and in your homes.

A CHRISTMAS EXHORTATION.

To-day is a day of thanksgiving for the greateſt of God's gifts. Let it not be observed as a day of ſelfiſh thanksgiving. Above all other days ſhould it make you practically kind, merciful, and beneficent. Let kind thoughts and deeds on your part ſhow that you ſtrive to appreciate God's kindness to you. When your home this night is lighted up, and, richer than all other muſic, the air is full of the blending harmonies of children's voices, and when with those whom you moſt love you ſhare all that moſt bleſſes you, be able to remember that during the day you have made some other home happier, that some other dwelling, which, in its poverty, but for you, would have been more wintry, because of the surrounding joy, is made as cheerful and light as yours, through your kindness. You know, for who does not know, some ſick person, this day ſhut up in a lonely chamber, and enduring the sad monotony of

pain. You know some person, young or old, who has few friends, who is very likely to be forgotten and neglected. You know some sad home this day made more sad by the memory of the paſt. While you forget not your proſperous neighbors, firſt of all, and before you sit down to your loaded tables or meet under the lighted evening lamps, remember these poor, or ſick, or sorrowing, or neglected ones, who have not many friends to think of them. Make it a day of pleasure for those whom you love, but let not the day which commemorates Him who gave his life for you be turned into a mockery, by being made a day of selfiſh pleasure. Hallow its enjoyments by kind offices, and by kind offices to those who need them, and above all, let them be hallowed by the thought of God. We meet this day in a common worſhip. It is well so to do. Our very pleasures take their beſt grace from religion, and unless aſſociated with religion,—unless brought within the circle of its expanding light, turn into miniſtrations of vanity and selfiſhness. Thus, in all that you enjoy yourselves, remember Him who hath given the power to enjoy; and when the night

closes round you, and ſilence is in the ſtreets and in your homes, be able to remember that this day you have endeavored to make others happier; and as you begin it with social worſhip, let your laſt thoughts before you ſleep be of that all-merciful Providence, who watches over your ſlumbers, who leads you through the peaceful night to the light of a new day, and who ſhall lead those who truſt in Him through the night of death to the everlaſting life.

THE NEW YEAR.

There is a kind of geology of life. We live through successive strata of experiences, and each new stage is attended by the development of energies which before were latent, and on whose right direction and control the prospects of life depend. From time to time life is revolutionized by a new element. The new experience makes us different beings. We are disjoined from the past. It is almost like death as we pass from one stage to another. Here is an opportunity provided by God for a beginning of a right life. He awakens the heart, arouses the conscience, compels us to think, does all that can be done for free beings, but the choice of what we will do depends upon ourselves. Do you stand at one of these eras? Suffer not the blessed hour of heaven to go by. Choose seriously the way of life. Let your resolves be fixed in your own soul, and be fortified and hallowed by prayer that each stage of life may be a step upward, and the whole of life a preparation for the more blessed life which shall hereafter be revealed.

THE NEW YEAR.

If there be any one who is conscious that his life, as a responsible creature of God, is not what it ought to be—whose virtues are more the virtues of accident than of intention—who heedleſſly delays taking that ſtand on Chriſtian ground which he nevertheless sometimes means to take, let him hallow the New Year—for what better or holier thing can he do?—by a considerate and decided purpose, with God's help, to make his life a Chriſtian life. As with doubtful hands we puſh away the ſhades and take our firſt ſteps in the opening year, the thought cannot fail to come to us all of how little we know what is before us. That joy may not lose its freſhness, nor the foresight of grief cruſh us before the time, and that faith may not too soon be loſt in sight, a merciful Providence does not permit our eyes to penetrate the soleïmn myſteries of the future. One

thing only we know,—that he walks safely through the ſhadows, who walks by God's law. Our earthly plans may come to naught—our earthly hopes be blighted—but truth and mercy and pious truſt in God ſhall abide forever. They ſhall be a light in the dark valley, and the life of man forevermore.

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

A NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS.

LIFE is a journey. The analogy runs out into particulars. On the journey the moſt of the time is spent in travelling a previouſly selected road. But at intervals we come to a parting of the ways—ways widely divergent and leading to very different ends—and we muſt choose which we will take. At one of these landmarks we ſtand to-day. We do not make it an occasion; already in the order of things it has been made so by Providence.

Why, I know not, and care not to know; but the hours that mark the closing of one year and the beginning of another, are felt by us all to possess in some way a peculiar and most serious character. We cannot help it. So many thoughts meet at this centre, a year is so large a fragment of life, it is so measured out by the numbered milestones before our eyes, it so speaks and says, thus much longer hast thou lived, and thus much nearer art thou to thy grave,—there are so many memories of those who were with us a year ago, the innocence of childhood, the fair forms of youth, the mature in age, with us a year ago, but whose graves are now covered with these winter snows, and the possibility that we ourselves may have been borne down to that narrow house for all the living before another New Year's Day returns, —there is such a summoning up at this point, of the responsibilities, affections, the hopes and fears of life, that in spite of ourselves it sobers us, and forces us to think. Sad, indeed, would it be, if we could pass through this dark archway of time, out of one year into another, leaving so much behind that cannot be changed,

and entering into such uncertainties in the future, sad would it be if this epoch in our mortal life did not bring with it serious thoughts. Over the land laſt night, in uncounted homes, following immemorial cuſtoms, there were myriads who with young hearts and laughing voices, danced and sung out the parting year. And so let it be. On this earth, so full of untold griefs, it ſhall not be my office to dim one lamp of innocent joy. Let the gladness of the heart utter itself as the Creator meant it ſhould do. But in all the gay and bright movement of young life, how much of secret misgiving. In that flowing ſtream of sparkling melodies, what ſtrange undertone is that? Is it a dirge—which, diſtant and faint—heard and not heard—mingles its low and solemn cadences with all these exulting ſtrains?—Ah! that saddened cadence, the loweſt and fainteſt of all, is heard above all, and is ſtill heard when the lamps of joy are quenched and the muſic ſilent. The moſt youthful, as the evening closed and they sought their chambers alone, were made to feel how serious a thing it is to live. As the bell ſtruck the midnight hour, its ſtrokes falling on

the heart, how rose before them, as if taking a viſible form before descending into the tomb of the Paſt, the events of the departing year. Farewell, how many hearts were saying, farewell, oh parting year! Farewell, dear kindred, whose graves are in your ſhadows,—farewell seasons given for duty, and which might have been made so bright by my fidelity! Farewell the bleſſings of God, which have been calling on me for gratitude! Farewell my life, which is parting from me,—farewell, oh hours, which on dark wings are flying upward with your record for eternity!

And those of us who are older, it may be, have had other and sadder thoughts—so many duties neglected, so many opportunities of usefulness disregarded, so little improvement where we moſt needed it, so much remaining to be done, and only a life so much ſhorter in which to do it. Happy is he, who looking back a year and remembering the purposes of that season, is able to say that he has been faithful to them. If we could say, during the paſt year, we have been regardful of the welfare of our friends, and have cheriſhed juſt and kind

thoughts towards those who imagined themselves to be our enemies; we have done our part in promoting useful enterprises; we have endeavored to lighten the preſſure of want and of sorrow; we have reſiſted our beſetting sins; we have been grateful to God for his bleſſings while we have enjoyed them; and in the employments of life have sought to do his will;—if we could say this with truth, what a fair year were it to look back upon. But however the paſt may be, it is gone,—and here is the fearful thought. Once paſt, it remains unchanged. The Departed Year, with its evil and its good, has gone out of our hands. A year ago, it was in our power to make it what we pleased. It is so no longer. Day by day, it has gone paſt, has become fixed, and changeless, and irreverſible—no longer subject to our choice, but only to the Divine judgment.

We ſtand on the threſhold of a new year. We muſt make our plans as if we were to live through the year, and yet it muſt be with many reserves and qualifications. For while many ſhall see the year's end, there are some, we know, who will not see it. Whose name has

on it the mark for the grave, we may not know; but some of those, we know, who welcomed one another at the beginning, will not be here at the end. And soon all ſhall be gone, and a new generation fill the places that we have occupied. The few survivors, worn and bent with years, ſhall alone remain, amidſt the ſolitudes which death has made. How ſhould this fact, which nothing but the madness of folly would try to keep out of sight, change the view we take of life! What contempt does it throw on our petty wranglings and ſtrifes, our small ambitions and selfiſh paſſions!

Could the veil that hides the future be lifted, could we know that we ſhould not see the end of the year on earth, what is there which you are neglecting that ought to be done? If in the uncertainties of life there is one queſtion above all others at this season which a reasonable man ſhould aſk himself, it is this—What is there which you are neglecting to which you ought to attend? It is wonderful that this great fact, the uncertainty of life, influences us so little. Doubtless it sometimes throws a darker thought into the mind, it gives an attractive

sadness to poetry, it awakens a tranſient feeling, and prompts a tranſient reſolve, it may affect the character and methods of one's business life. But how little influence has it over our more settled moral and religious purposes. And yet we have definite convictions in regard to the future. We believe that for the heavenly happiness there must be some preparation of life and of character. What then ſhall we say of one who knows that any day he may be called from this scene, and does not often aſk himself, "How far does this course which I am pursuing prepare me for that which death will so soon reveal?"

Living, but living an uncertain life, let the season utter its warnings. One thing is certain, that if you deſire improvement in any thing, it will never come to you accidentally. It muſt begin in a diſtinct, resolved purpose to make a change for the better;—and this is a proper season to be devoted to conſideration and to Chriſtian resolutions. I call on you to give this day to a serious review of your life, of what you have been living for, and of what you propose henceforth to live for. Give one day

to this. And let it be this firſt day of the year; at leaſt begin the year aright. Here you ſtand at the parting of the ways, some road you are to take, and as you ſtand here consider and know how it is that you intend to live. As you review the paſt, there are many poſitive evils which you know ought to be left behind. Carry no bad habits, no corrupting aſſociations, no enmities and ſtrifes, into this new year. Leave these behind, and let the dead Paſt bury its dead;—leave them behind, and thank God that you are able to leave them.

The new year will bring its opportunities of usefulness. Conſider whether you mean to meet them as a Chriſtian man ſhould, or whether you mean to avoid them. I do not say what you ſhall do, only do not go on blindfold;—know for yourself whether you mean to meet or avoid the opportunities of usefulness which Providence puts in your way. You have temptations, known if to no other, at any rate to yourself. At leaſt, this day look at them face to face, and know what they are, and know whether you mean to yield or not to yield to them. You have duties connecting you with

kindred, and friends, and society. Give this day to a consideration of what they are. Is this requiring too much? How many men are there, who pass for men of wisdom and prudence, who do not leave matters of profit or ambition to accident, who will not let the new year go by without knowing how their affairs ſtand with the world, but who do not, from one year's end to the other, make one serious and thorough examination into the merits of their lives. At leaſt give this one day to a review of the paſt and to a conſideration of the way in which you are willing to live for the future—the way by which, living or dying, you are willing to abide.

At this parting of the ways there is one of them in which a Chriſtian man ſhould go. Are you prepared to say, that road which I know a Chriſtian ſhould take, I choose. I take it humbly, for I know my weakness; but I take it deliberately, meaning, with God's help, to continue in it to the year's end. Are you prepared to say that? Is not that what we ought deliberately to say? Is not that religious purpose the one to which the year ſhould bring us all?

I prescribe no special rules of life; the one point on which I would fix attention is this: If you are ever to make any change for the better, that change must begin in some decided purpose of your own. You cannot expect God's help, except in aid of some such purpose. And because of its neceſſity, devote this day to a review of the paſt, and to Chriſtian purposes for the future.

The new year is uſhered in with mutual good wiſhes. Let the good wiſhes turn into acts; let no friendly ties, broken faſt enough by death, be lightly broken by you. Let no hard thing be done even towards an enemy—let those around you be the happier because you are in the midst of them—let the daily gifts of Heaven's mercy, which are yours, cheriſh a perpetual gratitude to Him, who giveth all; and, not knowing what a day may bring forth, not knowing which of your rivals or your friends, which of those aſſociated with you or dependent on you, which of the wretched whom you might relieve, or of the friendless whom you might benefit, may be taken away before the year's end, be careful that whatever works

are required by juſtice, or mercy, or religion, be done while you are able to do them. Put them not off till their death or yours makes them impossible; and let the new year which comes in with rejoicings be hallowed by Chriſtian fidelity.

RELIGIOUS DECISION.

Into what a solemn day does the dawn open, when a young person becomes conscious that the true happiness of life is to be found, not in its amusements, nor in its ambitions or succeſſes, but in usefulness, and self-denial, and virtuous endeavors, and a pious truſt in God. There are few who do not early learn, whether they practise what they learn or not, that no pleasures ever will satisfy, which do not call into exercise the higher qualities of the character. Then comes upon the mind that which sobers life, the feeling of responſibleness. Then dawns on it in broader light the majestic and awful idea of God. We are embosomed in fearful myſteries. We ſtand related to that which is highest and greateſt in the universe, and though

we may be frivolous, we become conscious that life is not frivolous, but most serious and in earnest. And then too, trailing its dread shadow across the skies, comes over us the idea of death. One companion after another is taken away, till we almost look into the open gates of eternity. In a few years we must pass the dread boundary. What is there beyond? The eye sees not, the mind falls back appalled from before the clouded mystery. We can hear the beating of the surf, the faint murmur of the sea, on whose dark waters we must soon embark. But what doom is beyond, who shall declare? We feel that our hope in that untrodden eternity must depend on having wills and inclinations submitted to the will of Him who is over all. Whatever is best in the human heart, and grandest in human relations, and most awful in human destiny, declares the necessity of the Christian heart and life.

ETERNITY.

No point can be arrived at where it stops. We may accumulate years together. We might

trace back the paſt by its great men and its great deeds, by its generations, revolutions, and epochs, even to the creation of man. During this time what scenes have been acted; how many human hearts have beat; how many virtues and how many crimes thrown alternate sunſhine and eclipse over the world! Yet what is all this interval of time to eternity? But a point in infinite space!—a ſolitary ſtroke of a midnight bell, ſounding once and no more in the void abyss of endless ages.

THE EPIPHANY.

Collect.

O God, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only begotten Son to the Gentiles: mercifully grant, that we who know thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of thy glorious Godhead, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE EPIPHANY.

CHRIST THE DESIRE OF ALL.

A SERMON FOR EPIPHANY.

And the desire of all nations shall come. *Haggai* ii. 7.

THIS day is set apart to commemorate the manifeſtation of Chriſt. Of the ſtar in the Eaſt, of the ſhepherds who heard the angels' song, of the wise men who laid their gifts at the feet of the infant Saviour, we know nothing beyond what is written. The Saviour's coming was firſt proclaimed to the ſhepherds. He was firſt welcomed by the wise men. But his kingdom was only ſlowly eſtabliſhed in the world. In these different claſſes of men, and in the ready or heſitating way in which they received Chriſtianity we find an illuſtration of those ſtates of

mind which prepare men for the reception of Chriſt, and which serve to explain some of the great problems both of belief and unbelief.

In the ſhepherds who liſtened believingly to the angelic anthem, I see a type of the pre-ordained affinities between religious truth and the ſimple and unperverted heart. Where has Chriſtianity found readieſt acceptance? Not among the wise or the ignorant as such, but among those whose minds have preserved moſt of their natural ſimplicity. In the throng of cities, one is hardly surprised to find any degree of religious unbelief. It is not because men reason more or less, but because the great inſtincts, which impel men to seek religious truth, are crowded aſide and ſilenced in the preſſure and fever of this artificial exiſtence. Among natural scenes, because man's nature there seems more eaſily to maintain its ſimplicity, and because these inſtincts are brought more into the immediate presence of God's manifeſtations, the same infidelity seems a ghaſtly and monſtrous intruſion. Where is the empire of religion? Not in courts and camps as such, nor among the mountains or the valleys, but wher-

ever hearts preserve their ſimplicity, wherever the original nature of man is not overlaid by secondary paſſions, there is the empire of religious faith. She paſſes by the gates of the proud, and enters a gracious and welcomed gueſt into the dwellings of the humble and pure. She finds ready adherents among those whom we may suppose these ſhepherds to represent. Chriſt is the deſire of the ſimple heart. His truth answers its myſterious questions, solves its perplexities, and gives meaning to its sublimeſt aspirations. It is recognized and embraced, because it is felt that it meets the holieſt desires of the soul.

But not the ſhepherds only; the sages of the East welcomed the Saviour. And in this I see an illustration of another truth, which is, if men's natures are not perverted by vice, if these natural inſtincts are not deadened, the advance of intelligence makes the need of higher light, of the light of revelation, more deeply felt. Just as mind and heart are developed, the great queſtions relating to God, to futurity, and to human deſtiny, aſſume a more solemn intereſt. So long as the moral nature

is not imbruted and subverted, we need not fear that increaſing intelligence will endanger religious faith. It only makes the neceſſity of it more felt, by cauſing these great queſtions to press with heavier burden on the soul. The brute has no foreſight even of death; the brutiſh man has little forethought. His mind does not rise up into the region of religious ideas. The Auſtralian savage, prowling amidſt his marſhes, is little disturbed by those questions which take hold on the invisible. But to Socrates and to Plato, these queſtions are inveſted with a momentous interest, compared with which all others are inſignificant and trifling. And such were they to the men in ancient times, who devoted their lives to searching for truth; who sought it from the oracles of their gods, from the ſilent heavens, from the grave, and in sad explorations of their own hearts. These were the men, not the base and the sordid, but the wise and good, who cried out for light, and implored the heavens that some divine voice might speak to the blind and ſtruggling heart of man. Such spiritual wants, more even than the viſible ſtar, led the eaſtern sages

to the feet of Chriſt. It was the homage of science to religion,—a confeſſion of the need in which reason ſtands of revelation.

These inſtinctive cravings for light lead men to the Saviour. The firſt disciples were disciples before miracles were wrought. As they sat at the receipt of custom, or on the ſhores of the Galilean lake, the Saviour said to them, Follow Me,—and there were such marks of divinity in his words and presence, that they arose and left all, and followed him. Were Chriſtianity to appear now for the firſt time and say, follow thou me, where would the men be found, who, thus recognizing the divine lineaments of truth, would leave all for its service? Not the base-minded, not those with thoughts faſtened to the earth, not those absorbed by worldly ambitions and satisfied with material pleasures, but the pure and unselfish, the simple-hearted and juſt, and piously-disposed. And why? Because to receive truth requires a condition of mind suited to receive it. Scientific truth is seen to be such readily only by scientific minds. Moral truth requires a moral condition as a preparation to receive it. Those who firſt

embraced Chriſtianity muſt have had this preparation. Simple and noble minds, with infinite defects doubtless, but simple, and loving truth, they welcomed it as the eye welcomes the morning light. And it explains another fact. They who embraced Chriſtianity with one hand held their life in the other. None but heroic natures in such emergencies come forward cheerfully to be the forlorn hope in the world's advance. As in all great emergencies, noble natures are tempted out by the very dangers of the exigency. But in the case of Chriſtianity, there was the union of both—the ſublimeſt truth winning to its ſtandard simple, unſelfish, and truth-loving minds,—truth, ſcorned, perſecuted, endangered attracting to its ſervice heroic minds. And thus it was, that the early age of Chriſtianity was an age of martyrs—that thouſands like the Apoſtles came forward, holding life as nothing in this great cauſe of God.

But all men were not ſimple-minded or truth-loving; and on this very account their need of the guidance and reſtraint of religion was all the greater. They were not prepared to recognize the divine lineaments of Chris-

tianity. They needed that it ſhould come with authority; therefore it came, through God's mercy, in a form suited to the needs, if not to the deſires of the world,—came in the clouds of heaven—came in the form of the Son of God—came heralded and accompanied and witneſſed and glorified by miracle—came a viſible manifeſtation of the condescension and mercy of the Almighty Providence. Thus alike, in its nature and in its form, it met in its manifeſtation the needs of the world.

But it was not then alone that Chriſt met the needs of mankind. He alone, now as then, has power to meet and satisfy the deſires of the nations. This weary and heavy-laden world, burdened with cares and sorrows and fears,—what ſhall bring relief and comfort? The world has made great advances in whatever conſtitutes a material civilization, but it does not grow happier simply because it grows richer and wiser and more prosperous. The very excitement of mind which produces these results, only enlarges the horizon of our deſires, and makes them more craving and insatiable. At this moment, throughout Chriſtendom, there is

a reſtless agitation, and a craving for some perfect form of society which ſhall eſtabliſh a kingdom of God on earth, and reſtore the loſt Eden, and give contentment to all human hearts. But it is in vain. No inſtitutions, which leave the heart unchanged, can satisfy the deſires of the world. To expect it, is to misapprehend the purpose of our mortal exiſtence. Man is not here for enjoyment, but for virtue. The more this immediate enjoyment is made the great end of thought and exertion, the more certainly is the wiſh of man defeated. This very craving for happiness, if it find satisfaction at all, muſt find it not chiefly in inſtitutions, but in a faith which inspires the mind with more exalted hopes, brings it under the control of higher motives, and, in the power which it gives to sacrifice the world, raises it above the world.

Chriſt is the deſire of the weak, the ſinful, and the penitent. For through him alone comes the aſſurance of God's mercy, and help, and forgiveness. The guilty world, diſturbed by misgivings, tortured by remorse, from its depths of self-abasement, looks up to the Redeemer.

There is sorrow on the earth, and it enters

daily into all our homes. And what can the world do for mourning hearts? It ſtands by the grave's mouth with the inverted torch. It points not upward like the angel of the reſurrection, but downward into the darkness. It can say, it is useleſs to grieve. It can say, wait for time, the conſoler. It may drug ſorrow with opiates, but it is quite another power, which, while it keeps open the tenderneſs of the heart, infuſes into it the balſam of an immortal hope. Sorrow and trial find their true guidance in Him alone who paſſed through Gethſemane and from the croſs to heaven; and the dying have hope only in Him who is the reſurrection and the life.

The angels' ſong is no longer heard, and the ſtar which guided the wiſe men is faded from the ſky. But the inſtincts which impelled the ſhepherds and the ſages to give heed to heavenly manifeſtations ſtill remain. While inſtead of the vaniſhed ſtar, from that far diſtance, through all the dark experiences of intervening ages, ſhines an ever-increaſing ſpiritual light to guide our ſteps. And the ſame inſtincts which taught the humble and the wiſe to look to

Christ, are prompting us to lay our wills and our hearts at the feet of the Saviour and Redeemer.

ASH-WEDNESDAY.

Collect.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing which thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all those who are penitent; create and make in us new and contrite hearts; that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD LEADING US TO REPENTANCE.

"Not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth men to repentance." So do the Scriptures speak of repentance. In them it is nothing of gloom, or arbitrary exaction. It is an act illumined with the highest and most glorious hopes. Their language is, Repent ye, for the Kingdom of *Heaven* is at hand. It is leaving behind all things base and bad and degrading, and ascending into the light. God smiles upon it; the angels rejoice over it; the earth is blessed by it.

The opportunity and ability to repent, is one of the highest privileges that God has granted to man. Let decay commence at the heart of the oak, the tree has no self-restoring power, but must go on decaying till it falls. The temple whose foundations begin to crumble cannot restore itself, but, faster or slower, will crumble

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till it sinks in the duſt. Bird and beaſt, could they wander from their inſtincts, know not how to correct their errors. But to man, within certain limits, and to man alone, Almighty God has seen fit to give the power of self-recovery. If moral decay touch his heart, and the innocence of childhood be gone, and sin have darkened his way and his bosom, ſtill all hope is not gone. There is ſtill a power at the centre to reſiſt evil. And through its exertion, difficult though it may be, he may be raised from the darkness and the night into the day. Is the use of this power—is repentance, to be spoken of as a thing of gloom? No: for the poſſeſſion of it, so frail and ſinful as we are, we ought to give loudeſt thanks. What were we without the power of repentance? Take not the moſt corrupt and vile, but take him who ſhall rank among the good. Were the wrong feelings that have insinuated themselves unheeded, like an untimely froſt, into his bosom,—were the unworthy prejudices he has thoughtleſſly adopted,—were his intereſts and affections too often fixed on improper ends—were these to remain forever—were there no escape from evil after it

once entered his bosom—*i. e.*, were there no poſſibility of repentance,—all the future to the frail children of earth would be a desert. There have been those who in a peculiar and literal way, have believed that man muſt reap as he has sown—that whatever paſſion or principle he allows to get dominion over him in this world, will keep its sovereignty forever, and that eternity will be spent in laboring in obedience to it. No matter what the satiety, the disguſt, or the remorse, ſtill they must toil on for the same ends that they have sought here, and the doom pronounced over them is, forever and forever. Now let this doom be stamped, not on the end, but on the beginning of life, so that he who had once begun to go wrong must by an inexorable fate go on wrong forever,—let there be no restoration, no recovery, no repentance,—and we ſhould, with bended knees, wear out the very footstool of Heaven in prayers to be permitted to repent. We ſhould not then speak of the difficulty of repentance—we ſhould implore God, as for an immeasurable good, to be allowed at every cost and difficulty to repent.

Do not look then, on the command of God

to repent as a hard and exacting one. It is our chief privilege. Let him who has wronged another thank God that he is able to repair the wrong. Let him who has indulged unworthy paſſions thank God for the time and opportunity to rescue himself from their tyranny. Let him whose life has been unprofitable to man, and in the ſight of God, rejoice that he is permitted to turn, and fill up his remaining days with greater usefulness. Let not man cling to evil, as if it were good, and ſink with it into the quicksand, but rejoice and be grateful that he may rise out of corruption and ſtand on the solid ground, a free man. Repentance is escape from otherwise hopeless peril. There is no one but ſins, and without the power of repentance ſin would bring despair. Repentance rescues the man from ſin to holiness, from earth to heaven. It takes him from the sympathies of the bad indeed, but it is to raise him to the society of the good—to the sympathy of all pure spirits, to the companionſhip of angels—yes, of angels; for they look on and rejoice over but one ſinner who repenteth.

The goodness of God leadeth us to repen-

tance. But do not therefore think it an unimportant thing. Its neceſſity is seen when we conſider that it is the eſſential, absolute condition of all true peace in this life. For what is wanting here to satisfy the worn and weary heart of man? It is not more or less success in the affairs of the world. It is a heart at peace with God! It is a heart which, renouncing itself and the dominion of the paſſions and the world, says, Where God calls I will go; what He bids I will do; his will ſhall be mine. Give this, and the light that ſhines on the outward world ſhall not compare with the light that fills the heart within.

If all this is true of this world, ſtill more imperative and neceſſary does repentance appear when we look forward to the future. It is little my cuſtom, and leaſt of all a pleasure, to appeal to the terrors of the Lord to persuade men to righteousness. But there are truths of such momentous import, that on them the pulpit muſt not be silent, and every Chriſtian congregation is bound to ponder them. I pretend not to penetrate into the ſhades of the future farther than revelation carries our ſteps. But I

would aſk, what proſpects in that future world does he set before himself, whose present life is devoted to selfiſh paſſions and worldly intereſts? There is such a thing as a Chriſtian life, and there is a life which is not a Chriſtian one. And these courses are not separated by narrow and indefinite boundaries, but by the controlling principles on which they are built up—by the love of worldly pleasure and advantage on one side, and by the controlling reverence for God and love of man on the other. What is there which he can look forward to in the future without fear, whose whole life has been spent in the neglect of those great principles which Chriſt has given as the controlling laws of life? Every thing which our Saviour has revealed as the result of such a course is covered with clouds and darkness. He has taught us that after death is the judgment. He has declared that for every word, and for the use of all our talents, we muſt give account, and that we muſt reap as we have sown. He has described the results of an evil course under every image which could moſt appall the heart of man. Through the dreadful cloud ſhines that sad

light which is only enough to reveal the abode of pain, and remorse, and woe, while from all its gloomy depths a voice resounds, reaching every ſinful and heedless heart, and crying, Beware! Beware! Eternity calls to the children of men, Repent, that ye may be saved! We ſtand on the borders of the eternal world, and before we pass under its ſhades, a voice from heaven echoing the words, tenderly and solemnly says, Repent!

CHRIST BY HIS HUMILIATION AND DEATH CALLING MEN TO REPENTANCE.

The cross of Christ is the great awakener of the world's conscience. As I ſtand at the foot of the cross and yield myself up to the influences of the scene, what are the meditations which naturally suggeſt themselves? I call to mind that God has done much for the happiness of man—much to ſhield him from pain. He built this fair world and filled it with good. He has surrounded man with privileges, and guarded him round about with defences. But

in the course of his providence one thing stands apart from all others. Here, to accompliſh some end which we must believe of ſufficient magnitude to warrant it, he has broken through the order and laws of nature—he has thrown open the everlaſting doors, and his viſible power has descended in miracle and wonder to the earth—he has sent his Son—and that Son, dearly beloved, has died on the cross—and this, for what?—what object ſufficiently great to warrant this interpoſition of the heavens on the dark and troubled earth? He has declared the object—it is a single one—to rescue man from ſin. Heedless as we may be of it, that is the purpose. What then, my heart aſks, must be the danger, and what the guilt of ſin, when God thus interposes to save man from it? The magnitude of the evil is seen from the magnitude of the means of rescue. The cross is the most solemn attestation to the guilt and peril of ſin. As I look at the cross, I remember that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that the world through him might be saved. And did my ſins help to nail the Redeemer to the cross? and can I live, in the

presence of such a spectacle, heedleſſly in my ſins? I do not pretend to define its varied modes of influence, but no fact can be more certain than that the cross of Christ has been the great awakener of the world's conscience. It has made the thoughtless think—has startled the insenſible from their lethargy; and they who were heedless to all other appeals, as the cross and its cause have risen before them, have bowed their heads and smote their breasts, and said, God be merciful to me a ſinner.

It reveals in a way not to be set aſide, that great truth which the world has ſighed and pined to know, the love of God—ſhows in the most impreſſive way that it is no exacting despotism, but the love of God, that leads man to repentance. The cross is the appeal of love—God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, and Christ so loved the world that he gave himself to save it. It reveals the tender intereſt of Heaven in the fate of the poor, misguided, sinful creature of the duſt. Threats, penalties may be reſiſted; who can reſiſt the power of love? An illuſtration beſt explains this influence. In the retirement of

the country, a young man grows reſtless and weary of the reſtraints that surround him. He falls into evil courses and ſhrinks from the parental eye, and he would be away, where the counsels of a father and the sad looks of a mother may no more reproach him, and, reckless, he seeks the seas. Far away, in foreign lands, in the concealment of great cities, he delivers himself up to evil companions, and unbridled paſſions. Years pass, and they who loved him, hear nothing of him. His memory is in their hearts and his name in their prayers, but they can discover, much as they seek, no traces of their guilty and ungrateful child. At length vague ſtories reach them of him. Returning voyagers have seen him in some diſtant port, on the other side of the globe, and ſtill others return and their accounts bring anguiſh and agony to the home he has deserted. His vices are bearing their natural fruit. With no companions but those of guilt—the ſlave and the victim of evil indulgences—in want and ſhame and ſickness, he is haſtening on towards his grave.—In that home is another son, tenderly and dearly beloved, and he says, I will arise and

go to my brother, and if it may be—save him. He embarks, and after long search, discovers him. The loſt one, when he first beholds him, would if he could repel him from his sight, for his presence brings back memories which he would gladly forget forever. But he will not be thruſt away—he ſtrives to unloose him from his evil entanglements—he provides for his wants—day and night watches by his sick bed, and beholds him reſtored to health. But in the meantime, catching the infection of a sickly climate, worn down with watching, he himself sickens and dies, a martyr to brotherly affection.

In the silent chamber the guilty one sits and looks on the corpse of the innocent one who has died in his eſſorts to save him. On the marble features of his brother a look of love ſtill lingers. It seems as if the silent lips moved and were about to speak and say, return, my brother, to the home which is open, and to the wounded hearts that love you.—Come not to this scene, companions of his guilty hours! Leave him alone with the dead! Let an affection ſtronger than death, speak to him!—His companions cannot mourn with

him, or underſtand the bitter thoughts, the tender, reproachful memories that rise up in his heart. Alone, through the unheeding ſtreets, he follows him to the grave. And when the earth has filled it, there he remains alone. If he heeded not his brother's living voice, he cannot but hear that voice which speaks from the grave. His heart says, here indeed was love! Thy brother died to save thee.—Who is he that can reſiſt such an appeal? Muſt it not touch his soul? Though he has repelled warning and reproof, ſlighted conscience, interest, and every other motive, he cannot reſiſt the power of diſintereſted love. In the bitterness of ſhame and remorse, his heart compels him to say, my brother ſhall not have died in vain. I will leave these guilty ways. I will return to that home I am so unworthy to enter, if it be but in duſt and aſhes to confess my sins and be rejected from its doors forever. I will encounter any penalty, any reproach, but I will return.

Such, only in an infinitely higher degree, was the miniſtry of Chriſt—to recover the wandering, to rescue the loſt;—and the language of

his cross is,—Return, return to thy Father's house; come back to thy forsaken home; come back to the ways of peace and the home of love. From that cross, the love of God, who gave his Son to redeem the world, ever speaks. All the love of Heaven concentrates its beams on the cross. The cross was reared by the love of Heaven and the guilt of earth.

REPENT YE.

It is the goodness of God that leadeth men to repentance. If He suffers the evil course to reap its evil fruits, it is that the bitter experience of sin may furnish the correction of sin. And no sooner does the prodigal turn, than God beholds him. He hears the first sigh of penitence. On the wings of his mercy, through holy and sustaining influences, He goes to meet him, while he is yet a great way off. His love has remained the same, and the angels of God rejoice for one who was lost, that he is found; for the dead, that he lives again.

Is there one who has been heedless of his

duty, and whose heart is yet capable of grateful emotions—who remembers the goodness of God, how it watches over him by night and by day, at home and abroad, from the cradle to the grave, who feels the wickedness of ingratitude, and remorse for his course, let him heed the goodness of God, which is calling him to repentance. Let him caſt off the ſins that beset him, and here, in the silence of his heart, say, I will arise and go to my Father.

And let it not be delayed by those treacherous pleas with which the paſſions would seduce the conscience. Say not: When the blood of youth is cooled down, I will give up this dangerous pleasure, or curb the paſſion or appetite to which I now ſinfully yield. When I have secured a little more of this world's goods, I will leave this course which my conscience tells me is at leaſt a doubtful one. When business grows less preſſing I will think more of the requirements of God. When my selfiſh ends are all secured, I will think of doing good. On such rocks have uncounted souls been wrecked. But suppose you are not practiſing a miserable deluſion on yourself, suppose that this time of

better purposes and better efforts ſhould ever come,—I aſk, what is the nature or worth of the repentance you propose. Will you never give up a ſin till you have extracted from it all the gratification or advantage it will give? What is the worth of repentance for a paſſion which has been purposely delayed till its fires are gone out with age? What merit in giving up an indulgence, when satiety has dulled the edge of appetite, or of ceaſing to be engroſſed by the world when every worldly end is attained, or infirmity incapacitates you for the purſuit? Alas! this is not the way to repent. Show your reverence for God by reforming from ſin when it coſts you some effort to reform. While paſſion is ſtrong, and jealousy and wrath yet burn, subdue their flames. While appetite craves, and temptation solicits, and habit commands, and the world is urging you on in an evil way, reſiſt, refrain, reform. While there is an opportunity of doing good, do it, and wait not for that more convenient season which may never come, and which, if it come, may bring with it neither opportunity nor a better disposition. Wait not till death ap-

proaches to caſt on the altar of God, the laſt relics of a life which has been given up to the world; but, while vigor and health and years remain, and affections are not waſted away, and there is time and opportunity, yield a willing service to God.

If these are but the suggeſtions of soberness and truth, then there is another conſideration following from them, which ſhould urge any one who is walking in a course which he does not approve, to leave it at once, and enter on a course and adopt principles which his conscience can fully approve. It is the danger of delay, growing out of the progreſſive power of habit. We moſt frequently think of habit as manifeſted in some of its groſſer forms of vices viſible to all men. But these are only the symbols and manifeſtations of its deadly power over the soul within. It chains the spirit not less than the body. Its bonds seem but as threads of goſſamer, yet are ſtrong as ſteel. They benumb, they ſhut the eye, they close the ear, they hang weights of lead on the soul, they imprison the conscience as in walls of ſtone. They say to the man whom they have subjugated, think

this, and he thinks it, do this, and he doeth it. And this power grows day by day, till one evil habit may in time give its color and ſhape to the whole man. And the strongest habit of all is perhaps the habit of making no effort to attain a higher state of character. Many a youth has started with elevated purposes. But not acted out, they have degenerated into occasional feelings, and then have died away into the dead-sea calm of indifference. Nor stopping here, he has trifled with dangerous temptations, and the trifling to-day becomes the yielding of tomorrow, and drawn on by the reſistless power of habit, he has finally sunk in the abyss.

I once knew a young man, celebrated through all the region where he lived as a strong and vigorous swimmer. With a brother and two or three friends, he visited a solitary beach for the purpose of bathing. It was a lovely day of summer. He swam out farther than his companions dared. He sported with the waves. He moved in them as if a part of their own buoyant substance. But unawares the tide had turned. He now sought the ſhore, but the current of the waters set against him He found,

to his dismay, that with his utmost exertions he could scarcely keep his place. His companions called to him, cheered him, sought for means of reaching him; but on the desolate, uninhabited coast no means could be found. He was too familiar with the sea not to know his danger. He struck out in the yielding waters with desperate strength. For an hour or more he maintained his place, but could not approach the land. And then his arm grew feeble. His friends could see that he gradually receded. Before him was the ſhore, the blue heavens above, the white sails of distant ſhips ſhone in the sun as they came and went on their peaceful errands; but for him there was no help! They watched with ſtrained eyes, that they might not lose him from ſight, yet hoping for his rescue. But even while they looked, he was gone, and nothing remained but the heaving waves, and the hollow moanings of the infinite sea which had received him into its depths. Thus, how often have friends watched a young man, entering an evil way, and in spite of all counsel, in spite of all the entreaties of affection, playing with temptation, confident in

ſtrength, delaying to turn, till temptation became ſtronger than he, and yielding and delay grew into a habit whose dark currents swept him away into the abyss of ſin.

Is there any one here whose heart condemns him—who is not what his heart tells him he ought to be—who is only delaying for a more convenient season to turn into the better way. Let Scripture and the dark experience of so many wrecked and ruined men warn him not to wait. Turn now. Begin to be faithfully what your own conscience and the law of God require you to be. Have the manly ſtrength—have the childlike diſpoſition to obey God, which ſhall cause you to say, here I ſtop in the evil course. Come what may henceforth, conscience and the God of the conscience ſhall guide me. And that you may not fail, seek his aid, who will let no one periſh who really seeks him—who would draw you to Him by his benefits, and bind you to his service by gratitude and love. Amen.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

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creature in the universe, excepting God; and it seems quite as absurd for us to imagine that we, who do not underſtand more than the ſurface of natural laws, who only penetrate into the ſuburbs of viſible nature, are competent to ſpeak loudly of the myſteries and laws and relations of the ſpiritual world. I judge not for others, but for myſelf. I do not ſuppoſe that the interval between man and the Almighty is a blank and lifeleſs void, but that planets, and ſuns, and ſtars, and the immeaſurable ſpaces of the heavens, are peopled with living creatures. I find no difficulty in ſuppoſing that beings with higher faculties than ours, have, within ſuch limits as God appoints, and in harmony with the laws of the human mind, the ability to act on us, to awaken thoughts, and to help our purpoſes. And that this is not the caſe is, I think, more than any logic or philoſophy ever yet has proved. I do not mean to ſay that the pictures of Dante, or of Milton, give juſt ideas of the inviſible world; but the mere fact that the greateſt minds, when ſtirred and roused to the higheſt action, are ſo impelled to ſoar into these unſeen realms, and to hold communion

with unseen beings, would suggeſt at leaſt the poſſibility, that there are realities that correspond to these conſtitutional tendencies of the intellect. And when, throughout the world, I find that good men, ſtruggling with evil, have not only been impelled to believe that they might look for the helping influences of Providence, but have also felt that in the perſiſtent and returning temptations that beset the will, there were beſieging powers of evil, external to themselves, I am ſlow to brand these convictions with absurdity. As to the how, and the when, and the what, revelation only could inform us; and in regard to these subjects, revelation says little. It leaves us very much as it found us,—with a vague human consciousness and persuaſion that we live, but a veil between, on the borders of an inviſible world. Sometimes, through that momentarily rent veil, a gleam of light, sufficient to disclose the brightness beyond, but not to disclose what is there, seems to break in on our darkness. And there I would leave it—one of the great myſteries which encompass our mortal being, which aſſociate our deſtiny with the great order and agencies of Providence, and give dignity to

tempted to be unfaithful, tempted to use your gifts to supply your personal wants, to attract the admiration of men, or to overwhelm your enemies by your power. But all these temptations which will beset you I paſſed through before you; in the ſpirit, in viſion, they gathered, a dark cloud, around the firſt ſolitary ſteps of my miniſtry. In my hunger, how easy to turn ſtones into bread, or when men mocked and doubted, to have thrown myſelf from the pinnacle of the temple, and viſibly upborne, to have ſhown myſelf the child of Providence, or with more than a conqueror's power, to have subjected the kingdoms of the earth to my sway. But any such course would have been an abuse of these powers, and a violation of God's will; and I chose the path of poverty, and contumely, and death. Let none of my disciples find, in circumſtances of temptation, any excuse for faltering in their obedience to God.

But, whether the account be viewed literally or not, the reality and nature of the leſſon taught, remain precisely the same. There is scarcely a paſſage in the Gospels that contains

inſtruction which it becomes us more to lay to heart. In this temptation, he who is our Head and our Guide and our Lord, became an example in that wherein lies either the diſaſtrous failure, or the triumph of life. The great moral ſtruggle of humanity was symbolized in that event—humanity in its ſtruggle with evil, not yielding, but triumphing, and triumphing in the name of God—the great myſtery of temptation and of rescue revealed through the divineſt life. Let us try and gather from it that inſtruction which belongs to us all.

It is obſervable that the temptation followed immediately the baptism. Scarcely had a voice from heaven declared, "This is my beloved Son," when he was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

Do you think it ſtrange, that oftentimes the worſt temptations ſeem to follow closely on your beſt purposes? In your retirement, your thoughts, ſtrengthened by prayer, have risen into a higher region—you have resolved that henceforth life ſhould be dedicated to God, to man, and to all holy uses. It ſeems as if in the ſilence you had heard a divine call, and

your heart has said, I am here, O God, to do thy will; and you have hardly gone forth into the world, when it seemed as if all the powers of evil met you, scattering these bleſſed thoughts and purposes, awakening all selfiſh inclinations and crowding on the mind their evil suggeſtions —often coming like angels of light, and offering excuses, defences, and reasons, for going with them. Yet such an experience was his who was the Son of God, and he has narrated it for your encouragement. It is as if his voice spake to you, saying, the whole myſtery of this ſtruggle I understand. But learn of me also to reſiſt, and these tempting forms of evil ſhall be repelled and vaniſh. The greateſt ſtruggles of our lives are pictured in this narrative, and pictured that we might have help and courage, and a divine guidance. It seems as if this narrative had been placed at the beginning, that all his followers in every age might be sure that he was no stranger to their condition, that he had entered into their feelings, paſſed through their ſtruggles, and undergone their trials, and that thus in life, as in doctrine, was their guide.

Here are three principal temptations to which

humanity is subject. The great toil of the world is for bread. There are millions who are literally pinched for food; there are millions in crowded chambers, in wretched cabins, who, at the very moment that they look around on fields waving with a harveſt, or warehouses groaning with the wealth of nations, hear their children moaning for bread. The whole of life is given up by them to one unending battle with hunger, —and this infinite toil to accumulate the comforts and luxuries of life,—to protect old age with competence or independence, to ſhelter the body, to supply its wants, and to gratify the senses and the taſtes, is bringing up nearly every day, to the whole human race, the temptation which beset our Saviour. There are other ways of gaining bread than by that honeſt labor and prudent forecaſt which God appoints. Every day men are tempted to violate some law of God, by the seeming prospect that in so doing they may turn ſtones into bread; tempted to sacrifice honeſty and juſtice and kindness for speedier and larger gains; tempted by these suggeſtions of the devil to desert God's law; but the answer of the Saviour is the answer for

all; man ſhall not live by bread alone. sary as it is, though without it the bc withers, ſtill man, the immortal creat spiritual being, deſtined for a life whi endure when the body is duſt—man, mortal creature of God, does not live alone. The body may be fed, and t may ſtarve. These earthly gains are r cient to supply the needs of the consc the affections, and of faith. They liv truths that come from God; and woe u who sacrifices the spiritual and immc to the temptations that come in thrc senses.

Another temptation, almoſt as univ the temptation to use God's gifts for display. It comes to the humbleſt ar higheſt scenes. Indeed, what is that gr so universally impreſſed on men, to ſtr a higher place, to ſtrive for a wider re this deification of successful ambition, petual appeal to ambition, as the chie lant to human exertion, what is it but a surrender of the world to this temptatic does it want defence. Why ſhould I r

use of ſtrength, or talent, or grace, or beauty, or whatever powers or faculties I have, to win the admiration of others? This very admiration gives me power to benefit them. The observation attracted by the splendid act, by throwing one's self from the temple, by the exhibition of powers that others have not, in attracting their admiring attention, prepares them for the reception of better influences. Alas, it is the delusion of the tempter. This seeking for admiration, this anxiety for display, this weary impatience of any virtue that is obscure, this foſtering of ambition in the young, and the homage paid to mere success, is but the glorification of selfiſhness—selfiſhness none the less base and sordid, though clad in imperial robes, and throned over an admiring world. It is quite another leſſon which Chriſt teaches. The ambition for display makes one's self the centre, on whose altar the world is to burn incense. But Jesus answered, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God. It is for us to do God's work in his appointed way,—not to look for the result to ourselves, but to his will. He is the centre, and him we are to serve.

Another temptation comes through the love of power. It may exiſt among the obscure as among the great. Fall down and serve me, are the tempting words of the devil, and this dignity and that place ſhall be yours. It is the temptation to seek power for itself, and to seek it by unholy means. Every man, who ſtrives to gain it by indirect and unrighteous methods, who, to gain it, appears to be what he is not, who, at the foot of the mountain, makes professions which are to be scattered to the winds when he gains the summit, who wins adherents by false pretences, who makes truth, or philanthropy, or God's cause, a means for self-aggrandizement, who sacrifices his justice and friendly claims and principles of rectitude in order that he may gain the prize before him, is yielding to the temptation of the devil. When men have practised holy frauds, and done cruel deeds, believing that in so doing they were promoting the cause of God, our hearts are indigñant at the profanation of holy things. And yet these men may have been honeſt and unselfiſh,—as who can doubt they often have been,—in doing deeds at which the heavens grew dark. But to prac-

tise the same cheats and falsehoods with no holy end, with no end above one's own selfishness, is a ſtill baser, and more complete surrender to the powers of evil.

Our Saviour was led into the wilderness to be tempted. Still it is the symbol of humanity. All temptation comes to us as individual beings. Temptation addreſſes the will. The queſtion comes, Will you obey God, or will you obey some other lord? The man may ſtand in a crowd, he may ſit with the gathered worſhippers in a church, but, in deciding that queſtion, he is as much alone as if he were the only being in the universe. There are many things we may do in company. We may ſhare in the thoughts, in the pleasures, and pursuits of those around us, but in every moral deciſion we are placed alone, and choose whether we will follow our will or God's will.

And here comes the one law that we are to obey. It is written, said our Saviour, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou serve. This is the thought upon which we are to retreat. When the thought comes, that by a little diſhoneſty or unfairness

you may advance your fortunes, or that by any unchriſtian method you may better gain the prizes of ambition, that thought is the ſuggeſtion of evil, and then, as did the Saviour in the wilderness, you are to decide whether or not God is to be served.

At his baptism it had been proclaimed, This is my beloved Son. But even in our Saviour's case, before his active miniſtry commenced, it was preceded by an act of self-consecration to God— submiſſion to God before laboring for men.

Again, in this we see a symbol of human need. A thousand labors are undertaken for human good, but the firſt fervor dies out, the benevolent impulse is expended, and lower paſſions come in, and the whole enterprise is debased or comes to an end. Where lies the secret of such diſaſtrous failures? It is that the agents have not ſtarted in the right spirit.

If we are to do God's work, we muſt do it in God's name, as his servants, by his methods, and in the spirit that he requires. Would you accompliſh some work of good, lift up your thoughts to its true character, see in it some-

thing which God requires, and let your will and your labors be consecrated to him. Let it be as the servants of God that you endeavor to do good, and feel that there is no greater privilege on earth than that which you are permitted to enjoy, when, as God's servant, you are allowed to labor in his cause. This self-consecration ſhall exalt all your motives, ſhall give you self-poſſeſſion and calmness, ſhall give you ſtrength and peace. No poſtponement of success, no desertion of friends, no want of sympathy, ſhall be able greatly to diſturb the calm and settled purpose of the soul.

No drearier scene could be pictured to the mind than that which here surrounded the Saviour. It was not the waſte and solitary desert alone, broken with rocky hills and valleys of sand, that was around him, but the years of the future gathered before him, dark with threatenings, full of misgivings, that miniſtry, upon which, when he entered, he entered on a road which ended at Calvary and the cross. The world was to be bleſſed and saved;—but it was to be by his suffering and death. Had some chance wayfarer beheld him, he might have

pitied him who was worn and waſted with faſting, but they who looked down from higher worlds upon him saw a holier as well as more terrible ſtruggle. It was as if all the powers of evil had flocked around, in one hour of conflict, to cruſh the hope of the world. In that dreary desert, good and evil met; and when he said, "Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou serve," the desert was exorcised. The powers of evil fled from before that Divine will. The desert was transfigured in the presence of a higher light, and angels came and miniſtered unto him. And so at all times, though the faſt and the despondency of the wilderness may precede the Chriſtian resolve, though numberless temptations may beset the unsettled purpose, yet the moment that the will is fixed to do God's will, the whole aspect of life is changed; the powers of evil flee away, and a divine ſtrength viſits the faithful soul.

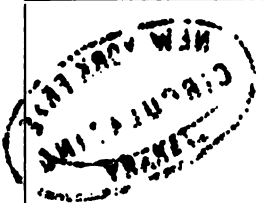
THE BOSOM SIN.

It scarcely matters whether the ſin be small or great. It may be some paſſion, or habit, or

intereſt, which holds but a small place in our lives, and may by the world be unmarked. If it exiſt within us, and we know it, no matter what otherwise may be our virtues, this one bosom ſin will finally palsy our whole moral being. That one loose plank may ſink the mightieſt ſhip that ever floated on the seas. A man's firſt ſtep onward muſt be over this ſin of which he is conscious. It may be but taking a mote out of the eye, it may be cutting off the right hand, but that ſin muſt be put away, or he will ſtand ſtill in his Chriſtian course. And worse than this. Through the implications of society and habit, through the love of conſiſtency, one such ſin, retaining its maſtery, may drag the whole character down to its own level. If one purposes generally to be a good man, this ſin will conſtantly recur to him, and will bring perpetual self-reproach. The thought of moral or religious progress will come to be aſſociated with conqueſt over it. All else is easy. There muſt be the place of ſtruggle, and if he fail there, he yields up and is dispirited and loſt. It is as with an army in a battle. There is almoſt always some point

which is the key to the whole poſition—the loss of which decides the conteſt. It may be an eminence which the huſbandman hardly obſerves as he paſſes over it with his plough. But around it the battle rages. There the veterans of a hundred fights are planted, never to retreat. The artillery of an empire is pointed to sweep it with its iron hail, and squadron on squadron press on and are loſt in the midſt of the waving tempeſt of fire. Everywhere else the ſtrife is nothing. The embattled ranks pause to witness how on that point goes the day. If the position is loſt, from rank to rank, from squadron to squadron, follow dismay, and flight, and diſaſter. Such a conteſt muſt go on in the heart of every man who desires to be a Chriſtian, and yet has reserved some bosom ſin as an exception to his Chriſtian life. That is the key to his character. If he finally yield there, and surrender so much of his character up to evil, he will be dispirited, his moral ſtrength will be enfeebled, the next point of conteſt will be yielded, and finally nothing will be left but the ſhow of such virtues as intereſt or the community exact of him.

PALM-SUNDAY.



As Christ draws near to us, how shall we welcome him? It is not enough to rear temples in his name, and to chant hymns in his honor. So of old, the Jews cast palm-branches before him, and shouted "Hosanna." The true welcome is breathed from the lowly and trusting heart, which, though from afar looks up and rejoices in the coming footsteps upon the mountains, of Him who bringeth peace. It comes from those, who, in their earthly lot, would follow him in works of usefulness, and in deeds of love. It comes from those who long for a higher purity, a more steadfast righteousness, a more sincere dedication of the life to God and all good ends. In our frailty, we welcome Him whose words are strength; in our self-distrusting despondency, we welcome Him whose words are full of hope. In our desires for a better life, we welcome Him who is the true life; and, compassed about by these shadows of mortality, we welcome Him, who stands beside these ranks of graves, "the resurrection and the life."

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FIDELITY IN LONELINESS.

A SERMON FOR PALM-SUNDAY.

And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees and ſtrewed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the higheſt! *Matthew* xxi. 8, 9.

THIS day, called Palm-Sunday from the ſtrewing of palm-leaves before the Saviour, has been observed for centuries by a large portion of Chriſtendom in commemoration of Chriſt's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Without any special observance of the day, the remarkable event recorded in the paſſage from which the text is taken, may profitably occupy our thoughts. Our Saviour was coming from Galilee to Jerusalem, to the laſt Paſſover of which he ſhould

partake. He foresaw, and had already foretold, the fate which awaited him. On his way, on Saturday, he reached Bethany, and remained for the day with the family of Lazarus. Here great numbers collected to see him, and also, as we are told, to see Lazarus, who was raised from the dead. The next day, he left for Jerusalem, great multitudes following him. Departing from his usual cuſtom of avoiding the crowd, he rode into the city,—apparently desiring in the laſt days of his life to attract the attention of as many as poſſible to himself. In Jerusalem, his approach was already noised abroad, and multitudes who had heard of the raising of Lazarus and of his other miracles, hoping and vaguely believing that the long-expected Meſſiah had at length appeared, came forth to meet him. Expectation and hope burſt out into rapturous enthusiasm. They laid their garments in the way. They scattered the leaves and branches of the palm, the emblem of joy and victory, before him. With royal honors, they conducted him down the sides of Olivet, through the gates of the sacred city, to the temple where they hoped he ſhould manifeſt his glory,—ever ſhout-

ing, as they went, Hosanna to the Son of David! bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!

But in all that our Saviour did, there was no departure from the conſiſtency of his character, —there was ever the same mild composure—a being of heaven moving amidſt the tumults of earth. It was such a triumphal proceſſion as the world had not seen. He entered in the lowlieſt manner. There was no war-horse or chariot to bear him who came triumphing;—no laurels, the symbol of ſlaughtered enemies; no military guards and warlike trophies and treasures, and images of conquered cities; no captive princes swelling the train, to be taken aſide to the dungeon and the axe, as the conqueror turned towards the capital. All the ordinary circumſtances of triumph were reversed. Behold thy King, O Zion, cometh riding on an ass, in humble and peaceful guise. Inſtead of captive monarchs and ſhouting legions and the symbols of violence and blood, among those who followed him, were the sick healed, the blind reſtored to sight, the dead raised, and their cry of triumph was, Bleſſed is he who cometh

in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the higheſt!

This scene and the attendant circumſtances disclose what muſt be remembered, in order to underſtand the Saviour's character, and from which we may derive a leſſon equally impreſſive and inſtructive,—the loneliness of his lot,—the moral solitude in which he lived. His course was one of fidelity in loneliness. His seclusion from human sympathy was made the greater by the very multitudes that followed him; for their presence forced upon him perpetually the thought of how little they underſtood him or the object to which he was devoting himself. Probably in this very crowd there were numbers who, five days after, joined in the cry of crucify him. Their very following of him muſt have seemed like mockery. The immediate cause of it was the raiſing of Lazarus. They thought, and rightly, that he who could work such miracles must be the Meſſiah. They had found him, they hoped, who ſhould be the embodiment of Jewiſh paſſions, and who ſhould lead them to triumph over the foes of Israel. They hoped, not to be delivered from their ſins, but from

Roman subjection. A few, indeed, followed him for his own sake. Though their Jewiſh expectations were all blighted by his death, ſtill some of them—love triumphing over all disappointments,—followed his sad ſteps along the Dolorous way; they bowed their heads beneath his cross, they did not forsake his tomb; in the death of all their hopes, their hearts ſtill believing his truth. But even in their case, their imperfect underſtanding of his great purpose and their small number, only made more ſtriking that moral desert which separated him from the great body of the Jews. Nay, more than this, —the multitude followed him for certain specific worldly advantages, and when they found it was no part of his purpose to meet and gratify their worldly paſſions, disappointment growing into hatred, they were prepared to range themselves with his bittereſt persecutors.

His foreſight of the future, the melancholy contraſt between what the Jews were hoping, and what he knew was to take place, deepened and widened the loneliness of his lot. He could not ſhare their hopes for their country, any more than they could sympathize with his Di-

vine purpose for the salvation of the world. One of the ſtriking events of this narrative occurred when they reached the Mount of Olives. From the brow of this hill appeared spread out a scene, as it is described, of surpaſſing grandeur. The hillsides were hung with marble fabrics, line o'er line, terrace o'er terrace, ſtretching on to the blue horizon—sumptuous palaces, vineyards and gardens, and in the midſt the vaſt and sacred city, out of which rose the temple, ſilent and magnificent, "a mount of snow fretted with golden pinnacles." To a Jewiſh eye, there centred the glory of the world. On the brow of this hill our Saviour paused, and as he contemplated the scene, he wept over Jerusalem. In sad words he foretold her coming doom. "The days ſhall come upon thee that thine enemies ſhall caſt a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every ſide; and ſhall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they ſhall not leave in thee one ſtone upon another; because thou knowest not the time of thy viſitation." It must have been a strange and inexplicable scene to those who surrounded

him. But his thoughts were not as their thoughts. He looked through these ſhows of wealth, and splendor, and prosperity, and saw, beneath, the ſins of which the chosen people would not repent, ripening for their destruction. The spectacle, on which Jewish pride loved to look, faded away, and in its place rose a viſion of approaching ruin. He saw the beleaguering trench cut through gardens and vineyards; the dark lines of merciless legions, and the huge engines advanced againſt the walls—the famiſhing myriads within the city—the waſting peſtilence, the raging swords of contending factions, the ſtreets ſlippery with blood, and at length the horrors of ſtorm and sack, and amidſt tumult and flame, tower and palace and temple ſinking to the ground. As he looked, all around him was transformed; the exulting ſhouts filling the ear were changed into wailings of despair, hosannas into mournful dirges, and inſtead of triumphal proceſſions, rose the viſion of chained and mourning lines of captives leaving forever their native land. As when on the way to Calvary,—loſing the thought of his own sufferings in sympathy with those who loved

him,—he said to his followers, "weep not for me, but for yourselves and your children," so here, forgetting himself, he wept over Jerusalem.

The multitudes with our Saviour looked from the Mount of Olives and saw only the populous city of their pride, glorified in their eyes alike by memory and hope, and moſt cheriſhed by the Hebrew heart; he looked through the coming years of guilt and retribution to the haſtening realities of her woe and desolation.

Our Saviour was not alone merely when he retired to the mountain top to pray, or bowed in his great agony, amidſt the ſhadows and solitude of Gethsemane. His whole life was a solitary one. It is on this very point that the prophet seizes, in that sad and sublime description which reads almoſt like hiſtory: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not." "We did eſteem him ſtricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgreſſions, he was bruised for our iniquities." "All we like ſheep have

gone astray, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppreſſed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." "He hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgreſſors." "He trod the winepress alone."

I have described the moral solitude in which the Saviour lived for the sake of the inſtruction to be derived from it. Through this, he who was given to be our example teaches the hardest and the most serious of all lessons, fidelity in loneliness—fidelity in the absence of all moral sympathy. Not the loneliness of the chamber, or the fields, or the wilderness; for that solitude is consistent with the closeſt human relations,—not the solitude of the dungeon, to which one may be followed by admiring hearts, but that of a soul which must go through the moral conflict of life alone. Chriſt's miſſion to the lonely is what is revealed to us in this portion of the gospel narrative. Fidelity in loneliness—there is no higher lesson to be learned.

To be alone in the world is a phrase which

always includes in itself mournful images and experiences. We look with a saddened intereſt on the aged man whose kindred and family have melted away, whose friends are gone, and who lingers, a solitary survivor, among the graves of those on whose affection and support he reſted. But there are others, who seem bound to the world by ten thousand ties, more alone than he. There is much to be done and enjoyed and suffered in society. But within that larger circle, there is an interior circle of the individual life, where man muſt dwell alone. It is not accident, but the intention of Him who framed our natures and appointed for each soul a personal, individual discipline. I certainly do not speak of unreal things in saying, that many of the greateſt sorrows, from the nature of the case, cannot be ſhared; that there are anxieties, close and clinging, which come with the morning and depart not at night, which can hardly be spoken to parent or child, to kindred or friend; that there are fears and woes which admit of no participation, and ſins and temptations which muſt be ſtruggled with alone, and duties which are to be done without looking for

the help or thought of others. Many of the severeſt trials would only be increased by being known. There are disappointments, and mortifications, and hopes deferred, and difficulties reaching on from year to year, which muſt be met in silence. There are cheerful faces before the world, hiding tragedies in the heart beneath, and homes all brightness without, but within dark and cold. These things create solitude. The dungeon does not neceſſarily ſhut out sympathy; but he who is imprisoned in memories, or anxieties, or self-reproaches, or fears, which cannot be ſhared, though in the midſt of a crowd, is alone.

Let no one imagine that in this I am finding warrant for the selfish complainings of discontent, or for the feeble repinings of sentimentalism. On the contrary, this moral solitude is eſſential to the soul's growth. For us, who might never seek it ourselves, God creates it through the organic conſtitution of our natures. And if we would but use our minds to meditate and discriminate, we ſhould find the moſt beautiful illuſtrations of the wisdom and goodness of Providence, not in the coarser adaptations of the

material world, but in these more delicate spiritual relations, in the connections between the spirit and the order of the material world, and in this nice adjuſtment and balancing of the elements of an imperfect nature, so that through their neceſſary interaction they may expand into a greater perfection. Not in severity, but in wisdom and love did God appoint that the eſſential life of man ſhould be alone—enough of society to ſtimulate, enough of solitude for self-subsiſtent growth. And for two great ends. Firſt, for the personality of man. What we do in a crowd is hardly our own act. Thought and conscience and will belong to the general atmosphere rather than to ourselves. He who lives on others, who depends for his ſtrength on their sympathy, who is powerless, till he is sustained by their encouragement, who dares not truſt to his own convictions, except so far as they are the echo of a common feeling, can scarcely be said to have a personal life. The true man is he who can be faithful to convictions of his own when ſtanding alone; one who, though he may love sympathy as much as others, and as easily as others be ſtung and

wounded by reproach, can, if need be, ſtand alone, in ſolitary fidelity. As a diſcipline neceſsary to this end, man is ſo made and placed that in what is moſt eſſential he muſt act for himſelf, or not at all. Truth is beſt found in ſolitary contemplation. The great trials of the affections, which from their very nature are individual, make a ſolitude around one. The conſcience, which cannot throw its burden off, is eſſentially perſonal. Remorſe and penitence, and all the better aſpirations of the ſoul, are perſonal. The anxieties which depreſs, are ſolitary. Thoſe who kneel ſide by ſide and utter the ſame prayers, have each a ſeparate, perſonal exiſtence, and may be in ignorance of what is moſt momentous in each other's heart. There may be companionſhip, a general ſympathy, and good wiſhes and friendly thought, but below all, there is the moral perſonality of the man, which cannot be ſurrendered or loſt. And it is, that man may be man. The modern phraſe is humanity, as if all human beings could be maſſed and blended in one general abſtract word. But God made human beings to be individual men, and has appointed them a corre-

sponding discipline, which looks ever to that result. So, too, in regard to the religious sentiment. It is not by accident that the deepeſt religious feelings ſhrink from public proclamation at the ſtreet corners. No doubt there may be much and moſt useful religious sympathy; but the ſtrongeſt and deepeſt religious feelings retire into the ſecluſion of the private heart. When penitence and hope and fear, and the ſtruggles of the spiritual life, can be freely and unſhrinkingly uttered in the crowd, like any ordinary matters of the day, the depth and strength of them have abated. The man may have risen above into a settled peace, or fallen below into insenſibility. But the struggle is past. That was solitary. The Mount of prayer, the Gethsemane of agony, were solitary. One need not go to the desert, nor to the cell; the profoundest spiritual experiences will create a solitude of their own. And why is this? It seems to me that in it we may see the most bleſſed of purposes; the thoughts and feelings which we ſhrink from uttering to man, are already known to God. We long to utter them, we long for sympathy and help, we find

it by looking above. And thus it is, that all which is most sacred in regret or hope or moral purpose, carries the thoughts upward, and that which separates us from man, unites us to God.

But notwithſtanding the beneficent purpose, here is the most serious part of life. Those duties are comparatively easy which can be done in company, those self-denials almost cease to be such which our friends practise with us, and trials when ſhared seem to lose the character of trials. The true test of character is where what is done or borne must remain unknown, where the struggle must be begun and ended, and the fidelity be maintained, in the solitary heart.

To all such lonely hearts, Christ sets forth his great example, and reveals their true support. It was a divine life of fidelity to man, and fidelity to God, in the midst of a moral solitude. Surrounded by ſhouting thousands he was alone. Who there had any understanding of him? No being on earth appreciated the great end of his life or death. His own disciples loved and honored him, but they had as yet no clear perception of the nature even of his

miſſion. His humble condition and his ſufferings were a perpetually disappointing myſtery to them. So little did they understand the object of what he was doing, and so incapable were they of underſtanding, that with scarcely a word he left it to time and events to explain what now was unintelligible. To all the gathered multitude who followed him, this was the triumphal entry of the Meſſiah into the sacred capitol of what was soon to be the regenerated world. But in the midſt of their exultations, before the viſion of Christ, on the far off horizon, dark, between him and the sun, arose the cross on the hill of Calvary, each step bringing him nearer to its horrors. While their hearts swelled as they looked on the glory of Jerusalem, he wept over her approaching desolation. What he is doing is for the world's salvation, and yet his path muſt be trodden alone. When he broke the bread at the laſt supper, his disciples knew not the sad images which filled his heart. In the garden of Gethsemane they slept while he prayed. When he was betrayed and in the hands of his enemies, they forsook him and fled. He was faithful un-

to the end, while no man knew what that fidelity was; and all, so far from knowing it, because of it, deserted, mocked, and crucified him. He suffered for such as they who inflicted the suffering, and died for men like those who cried out for his death. Surely he had a right to speak to all lonely hearts. He more than fathomed the bitterness of their lot. There was but One Being who saw what was in him, and who sees what is in all. He was alone, and yet he adds, what must be the support of every solitary but trusting spirit, "I am not alone, for the Father is with me." There is no lot on earth so lonely, no trouble so unshared, no fidelity so divorced from human help, but it may find its counterpart in the life of the Saviour.

It is the vague consciousness of the utter want of human sympathy, and even of the comprehension of the Saviour's mission on one side, and of its connection with the overlooking heavens on the other, which as we read gives its peculiar interest to the event described in the text. Then and there was seen on the earth a spectacle which the world had never before

witneſſed, a ſpectacle at which human glory mocks, but before which all human glory grows pale, that of one moving under the all-seeing eye, going forward, peacefully, unreſiſtingly, to death, in order that the world, which underſtood him not, and which inflicted the death, might have everlaſting life—of one who made in his own death the triumph of his cause—of one who foreknew that he muſt be nailed to the cross, that he might begin to reign.

It was a ſtrange contraſt, and sublime, between the earthly aspect of that scene and the heavenly. The fickle multitude following in the train of Jesus, hot with Jewiſh passions and hopes, hailed him as their deliverer. They bore their king in triumph—the king with whom they ſhould reign over the subject nations. Except a few who had long followed him, and probably not excepting them, their hosannas welcomed him to the Hebrew throne and to earthly triumph.

Did the angels look down from above upon that ſpectacle? There were then hosannas in heaven, but in a different ſtrain. Hail to the Lamb of God that taketh away the ſins of the

world! Hail to him who dieth that man may live! Hail to him who would bring the world into willing subjection to God by the willing sacrifice of himself!

> Ride on, ride on in majesty!
> In lowly pomp, ride on to die!
> O Christ! thy triumphs now begin
> O'er captive death and conquered sin!

The Hebrew ſhouts of earthly triumph have ſunk into everlaſting ſilence. But the acclaim of heaven has been taken up by myriads of ranſomed men, who, caſting their crowns before the throne, repeat, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honor, and glory, and bleſſing; and the time ſhall come whe n every creature which is in heaven and on the earth ſhall say, Bleſſing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him who ſitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

THURSDAY BEFORE EASTER.

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. 1 Corinthians xi. 23–26.

THE LAST SUPPER.

On the day before the Paſſover, our Saviour sent Peter and John to prepare the place where they ſhould partake of it. It was done in such a way that the other Apoſtles probably did not know the place until they aſſembled, and one reason may have been that he might have a few laſt hours with his disciples entirely undiſturbed. The fulleſt account of these hours is found in John, who devotes five chapters, beginning with the thirteenth of his gospel, to a record of what was said and done at that time. It is one of the beautiful internal evidences of the trustworthiness of the narrative, that it was on the disciple whom Jesus loved, and who rested on his bosom, that the words of affection which Christ here uttered made the profoundest impreſſion. Matthew, the Publican, dwelt chiefly on precepts, and laws, and miracles, and such other events

as would have been moſt likely to ſtrike one like him. In the gospel of Luke, a person of more culture, we find the same general hiſtory, but he records especially the parables of Chriſt, and those outward events, which, as he heard them from the Apoſtles, would have been moſt likely to impress his mind; but the gentle and loving John, entering by a nearer sympathy into the mind of Jesus, dwells moſt on his spiritual teachings, and above all, records his words of tenderness and affection. As we ſhould expect from the character, his thoughts reſted not so much on what Chriſt taught or did, as on those words and events which revealed the depth of Divine love in the heart of the Saviour.

As they met in this upper chamber, Chriſt seemed to lay aside the light and power of miracle in which he was clothed, and as he entered the dark valley, he surrendered himself up to the tendereſt personal affections. He devotes these laſt hours to conversations which ſhall impress on his disciples the depth of his love for them, reveal to them more of the nature of his religion, and awaken in them a more unfailing truſt in God.

With what unconscious pathos and beauty does John begin the narrative of these laſt hours, after they had met together. "Now before the feaſt of the Paſſover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he ſhould depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." The firſt event which John describes is the waſhing of the disciples's feet. It is an event which sometimes seems to have perplexed commentators, and yet it is difficult to underſtand why, for it is one of the moſt beautiful and inſtructive of symbols. He would firſt of all teach his disciples that their greatness is to be found only in great labors and great sufferings for human good. In God's regard, not he that rules is great, but he that serves. The glory of the angels is, not that they have power, but that they are the miniſtering servants in God's works of love. The glory of Chriſt was, not that he was served, but that he himself served, and so must it be with his disciples. They were to be the servants of God and men, were to put aſide all idea of personal diſtinction, and to dedicate their

lives to Chriſt's work of promoting man's good. It was the great leſſon which, through all time, man would need to learn. In our times, the world is ſhaken with theories of equality and human brotherhood. In vain do the nations try to reach these through revolutions, or laws, or any external contrivances. The key to the myſtery is in the words of Chriſt. The jealousies, the tyrannies, the oppreſſions, the wars that vex the earth, come from the deſire of one to be superior to another; the universal selfish scramble to get or keep wealth, or power, or superior poſition. There is but one remedy, that they who would be great ſhould serve, that the larger gift ſhall make one feel that he is the more obliged to forget himself and to minister to others. By the most expreſſive symbol, Christ taught this in a way never to be forgotten, when he, the Son of God, clothed himself with a menial, and, therefore, in a true sense, the highest office, and waſhed his disciples' feet, saying to us all, "I have given you an example that you ſhould do as I have done to you."

It is worthy of note, and a part of the ex-

ample, that this service was not confined to those who loved him. Judas sat in the circle of those whose feet were waſhed. He knew the purpose of the treacherous Apoſtle, and, troubled in spirit, said, "one of you ſhall betray me." The disciples looked on each other doubting what he meant. It is one of those touches of nature with which the narrative abounds, that when the others aſked who it might be, Judas also said, in the guilty confuſion of the moment, "Lord, is it I"? Another ſtriking point in the narrative, the moment that Judas was thus ſingled out, the Apoſtles, though they knew not precisely what was meant, saw the spirit of the man in his face; the guilty purpose flaſhed into his features; in the words of John, "Satan entered into him." It is a curious circumſtance, that in pictures of the Laſt Supper, Judas has been painted black, art thus ſtriving to describe what the Apoſtles saw. Judas went immediately out, and, in the words of the narrative, "it was night." It was night all around them, and all the powers of darkness were abroad. It seemed as if in that hour, the earth were delivered over to agencies of evil.

Only from one small chamber were they fenced out. In that room, the dim light revealed the very peace of Heaven. When Judas went out, the firſt words of Chriſt, as if taking the firſt ſtep towards the cross, were, "Now is the Son of Man glorified." No bemoaning of his own fate, no reproaches of Judas, but his soul seems to rise suddenly to the loftieſt height, and looking only at God's glory and man's good, he says, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him." When Judas left, the only jarring element in that holy concord was withdrawn, and Chriſt's words henceforth seemed bathed in an ineffable tenderness.

We read these words, text by text, coldly, and in so doing are insenſible to their meaning. It was not a continued discourse, but an interrupted conversation, and we have the words which made the deepeſt impreſſion. When you read this paſſage, try and call up vividly the circumſtances. At this moment, Chriſt knew that not all ſlept in Jerusalem. In the ſilent city treachery was awake, and the plan arranging for his death. In a few hours he would be separated from his followers. They

now liſtened to him with a vague, wondering, truſting affection, but they did not underſtand him. He was alone in this night of the univerſe, yet not alone, he says, "for the Father is with me." As you read, think how these words flowed out of the heart of Jesus, all melted with affection, with self-devotion, and holieſt submiſſion. They are words of profoundeſt, tendereſt, sublimeſt emotion. In this dread hour he thinks only of others;—there is no reproaching word. Peter says, "I will lay down my life for thee." How tender is the Saviour's warning. "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily I say unto thee, the cock ſhall not crow till thou haſt denied me thrice;" and instantly leaving such thoughts, he says, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me."

Over and over again he says, "Love one another." He tries to sink it into their hearts —the depth and tenderness of his love for them. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you, and my commandment is that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay

down his life for his friends;" and be you ready in love to lay down your lives for each other, for man, and for God. Never did another try to secure the devotion of followers by such promises as those of Chriſt to his disciples. His bribes are ſufferings and sacrifices. "The world will hate you as it has hated me." "The servant is not greater than his Lord," and "the time cometh when he that killeth you will think that he doeth God service. But let not these things make you afraid. You may ſuffer and die, but that which in this hour is my joy ſhall remain in you. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. In the world ye ſhall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, and armed with love ye ſhall overcome the world. Because I speak of leaving you, sorrow hath filled your hearts. Yet it is expedient that I go away, that the Comforter may come to you. I muſt leave you now, but in my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also." Such was his laſt conversation with his disciples. Soon he would be

in the spiritual world, and he would bind his disciples to himself and to God, and awaken in their hearts a holy love which ſhould raise them above all earthly fears or hopes. He truſted not to intereſt, but to love; nor was he deceived; for that love proved itself mightier than death, and it has overcome the world.

One thing more is to be observed. What were the parting words of Chriſt, the words of farewell, never to be forgotten? They were not words addreſſed to them, but to God, the ſublimeſt and the moſt touching prayer ever breathed. "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour is come." The whole seventeenth chapter of John is a record of this prayer, and it seems to me that no one can read it and remember how the Holy One found strength and peace in prayer, and ever again doubt that we need it. Judas did not pray. Herod did not feel the need of it. Pilate felt no need of it. The worldly and the cruel did not pray. But the Holy One, alone, on the mount, by the grave, at his own laſt hour, felt the need of prayer; and so long as the record of that example re-

light and trifling inſenſibility which closes the mind againſt its heavenly monitions.

And now that it is again spread before us, let us hear its leſſons of love. It ſtops us in the midst of our worldly careers, and brings us to a ſtand, and compels us to examine ourselves, and to aſk how far we are faithful to him. It calls on us to remember Chriſt's sacrifice, and God's mercy. It calls on us to cheriſh those kind and reconciling thoughts, which ſhould unite us as a Chriſtian brotherhood. It calls on us to consecrate our lives by a Chriſtian usefulness. And while we remember him who gave himself for us in his sufferings, may God give us grace so to live, that we may be able humbly but hopefully to look forward to the time when we ſhall behold him in his glory.

THE HOUR IS COME.

Not only then, and to him, as he was going to Gethsemane, but to all of us, each day brings its special point of conteſt, unforeseen before perhaps; but, for the time, there centres the conflict of life, there all temptations and

trials for the moment seem to meet, and there is a summoning of all your energies to reſiſt. There is a call on the soul to put forth its beſt powers; and at night, before you ſleep, in your prayers to your Maker, you are obliged to remember that the departed day has recorded your fidelity or your treachery to duty. These points of conflict come up succeſſively, day by day. What ſhall we do? The hour is come which is to try my fidelity. What ſhall I do? Shall I make believe that there is no trial here? Shall I puſillanimouſly yield? Shall I allow the temptation to be ſtronger than I am? No. Let the heart, looking up to heaven, say, This trial, which comes in the way of duty, comes in the order of Providence. The hour is come, a deciſive hour, which is to ſhow what is in me. In the order of life's discipline, to meet this trial I am placed here. In the great conflict of life, for the moment, it is here that God has aſſigned me my poſition. What ſhall I say? My prayer ſhall be, If it be poſſible, save me from this hour, whose trial I fear to meet; but if that may not be, help me, that, by fidelity and obedience, I may glorify thy name.

I do not mean to say that it is easy to meet the trials of life rightly. I do not mean to say that trial is not trial, and hard to be borne. But sad as every form of trial is, the saddeſt ſight on earth is not the ſuffering which it may bring; for ſuffering borne faithfully and piouſly, black as the cloud is, has heavenly light ſtreaming through its broken maſſes. But it is trial borne in a poor, cowardly, or bad ſpirit; trial which is none the less bitter because it is yielded to, which brings the pains of martyrdom without its hopes of heaven, the conflict with life's evils which leaves the ſoul the victim and not the maſter of the field.

Life is a conflict to all. There are ſome indeed ſo happily organized that this conflict ſeems—though here it is more in the ſeeming than the reality—an easy one. They grow into the graces and virtues of the Chriſtian with comparatively light ſtruggles. And this natural virtue, which grows as the flowers grow in the ſunſhine, has a harmony and delicacy which attract all hearts. But this is rare; and after all, the inſtincts of man pay homage to the virtues which are born of trial.

It is remarkable, the extent to which those artiſts who have filled the world with their renown, have introduced into their pictures the saints and martyrs of the earlier times of Christianity. We are tempted to become weary of their perpetual repetition, till at length we remember that there was a time when the nobleſt heroism of the world dwelt in the hearts of such men and women as these. They were the ones who put their life into their open hands, ready to give it at any call of duty and God; and the great artiſts, with the sure inſtinct of genius, have portrayed them in their ſtruggles, as the beſt embodiments of the nobleſt sentiments of humanity. And that which we thought had wearied us, by some ſtrange fascination ſtill recalls us to look at it again and again. And the world in its admiration of the work of art, acknowledges the nobleness of faithful hearts ſtruggling with the trials of life.

While I write, there is before me the picture of an aged man in the desert after a life devoted to Chriſtian labors and sacrifices,—a noble life of learning and self-sacrifice dedicated to Christ —in extreme old age, emaciated, scarcely able

to lift up his eyes to heaven, as he receives the laſt communion of which he ſhall partake on earth. The waſted body, that has hardly ſtrength left to kneel, was one at which Greek art, revelling in forms of beauty and ſtrength, would have mocked. Your own eye is repelled from these sad relics of humanity; and yet—you know not how—the eye muſt seek it again and again, till at length the thought of the artiſt dawns upon you. The body is ſhrunken and dying, but all the fidelity and faith and heroic aspiration of a life are looking out of that uplifted face. The eyes have a viſion of that which is unseen; the far-off heavens are opening. Let the body decay, let the limbs turn to duſt, the soul's life is triumphing over mortality. The hour has come, he has fought the good fight of faith, and is entering upon the eternal life. Shall the hardſhips and conflicts which have left him a scarred and waſted wreck on the ſhore of time be mourned? Already they are gloriſied. He has triumphed and not they. They are now his rejoicing and his hope, and the memory of them ſhall be the inspiration of ages to come.

But this conflict is not confined to conspicuous scenes or men; and in Heaven's ſight, the same crowns of immortal life are won on the humbleſt and obscureſt battle-fields as on those which fill the hiſtory of the world. While it is paſſing, it often seems a mystery that the pure and the gentle, who never had a thought towards others but of love and kindness, ſhould be subjected to trial. And yet the end of life brings with it a different judgment. You have often seen a mother who has borne all trials for the children who were dependent on her, who has held any self-denial cheap that was for their welfare, who has concealed her pains, and huſhed the outbreak of her griefs, and borne the burden of a life with an unrepining heart;—in this fair world that ſhe ſhould be the ſufferer seems an insoluble mystery. But as life advances, you see that a heavenly fortitude has grown out from that hard and harſh trunk of trial, that every self-sacrifice has infused a new purity into the affections, and that the ſharp griefs, never uttered to human ears, and which led her to seek, from that Being who knew them all, only the strength of trust and faith, have already elevated

and transformed her soul to a heavenly ſimilitude; and as the end approaches, the mystery of trial is solved. She has fought the good fight of faith, the trials are past, the hour is come, the gates of life are opening before her. That which seemed so mysterious to others is no problem to her. The words, which the world is ſlow to understand, her full heart repeats: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted!" And as the calm features reſt in death, the smile of earlier years, which comes back, dawning upon them, is but an omen of the heaven to which ſhe has gone. While we gaze, we remember that the trials of life are all connected with the ſublimeſt hopes of man; for they to whom, of all the great company of the redeemed, the faireſt crowns are given, are they who through much tribulation have entered into the kingdom of heaven.

OVERCOMING THE WORLD THROUGH CHRIST.

"These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye

ſhall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." These are very remarkable words. The Saviour was about to die when he uttered them. And in speaking thus to his disciples, he speaks to all his followers, and declares what and how much his religion has power to do towards enabling man, suffering, afflicted, tempted, to overcome the evils of life. While some are hardened by trial, and made selfiſh, complaining, and misanthropic, there are others who bring out of the furnace of affliction all sweet and gracious and heavenly virtues. In multitudes of cases they who were seemingly without ſtrength or wisdom have found out the way to meet and overcome evil, and inſtead of being injured by it, to make it tributary to a higher wisdom and virtue. And in a great proportion of these cases, when you aſk how they have been able thus to do and bear and profit, you are told that it is through the help of religion. In how many obscure homes scattered over the land, at this moment, are all the evils of life met with a cheerful, simple-hearted fidelity such as philosophy never inspired, and how many dying beds and be-

reaved dwellings are made sublime by the presence of religious faith. In some way, Chriſt does help man to overcome the world. He does not accompliſh this by removing the evil. And ſtill more, he does not accompliſh it by making man inſenſible to evil. On the contrary, his whole influence is to quicken the ſenſibilities, to make the affections more tender, and the heart more open. In ſhort, he does not neceſſarily have any thing to do with the evil, but with the human heart he has every thing to do. And what? He does this. He inspires man with a right purpose, and infuses into the mind truths and motives and faiths which give encouragement, ſtrength, and triumph to the right purposes. He builds up in the ſoul a Chriſtian manhood, which enables one to rise above the trial.

Take this poor man who is living on the brink of ſtarvation, whose family, when his labor ceases, muſt be without bread; who is surrounded by all the hard, depreſſing, tempting contacts of poverty, but who, when tempted to drown his misery in excess, puts aſide the cup and confronts the misery with an open eye

and a conscious heart; who sees how by some dishoneſty he might with probable impunity relieve himself, and yet will sooner die and leave his children to God's mercy, than let a dishoneſt purpose be harbored in their wretched chamber; to this man Chriſt comes and says: —"Better is righteousness than life. This course which you take, which may be folly to man, is the very wisdom of God." He breathes into his soul a holy truſt. He brings before his mind immortal truths, which give one the victory in this mortal ſtruggle. He says: "Better for you and your children to die, holding faſt your rectitude, than to live without it. This is not the worſt battle-field on which a man could die, and in this conflict for integrity, he that loses his life saves his soul." He who himself was faithful unto the end, says: "Be ye faithful unto death and I will give you a crown of life." And it is a profound belief of this—*i. e.*, his Christian belief, which makes this poor man a hero and a saint.

It was no intention of Providence that a religious life ſhould be exempted from any of the

trials incident to our mortal nature or relations. Nay; the holieſt being was subjected to the severeſt sufferings. His miniſtry of love led by Gethsemane to Calvary and the Cross. And the kind of peace which he promised was not earthly bliss, but that peace which he himself knew, and which neither Gethsemane nor Calvary could extinguish. The firſt purpose of Chriſtianity on earth is not to make men happy, but to make them righteous and devout children of God. Happiness will follow in due time, but the first purpose of life's discipline is to promote man's growth in virtue. But forgetting this purpose, the murmurer says, I have not deserved these trials. Why am I cut off from happiness? In order, I reply, that you may have something better than immediate enjoyment—something which could scarcely exist without the discipline of trial—and that is faith, and trust, and submiſſion, and strength of virtuous principle, and all those sentiments which connect man with God. With these one will have an approving conscience and a hope which looks beyond the grave. But the truth which

we need to have impreſſed upon us is, that the firſt purpose of this earthly discipline is the formation of a Chriſtian character; and that, when that is attained, the earth has yielded to man its greateſt treasure.

GOOD-FRIDAY.

"*When the bed from which Dr. Peabody was not to rise again was spread for him in his Library, it happened to be so placed that at the foot of it there hung a little drawing of his early home; and right over it, from the same nail, there happened to be suspended a little cross, which a young friend had made for him, covered with country mosses. He noticed the conjunction, and the next day, when dictating the sermon which he felt that he was to preach, though through another's lips, he recurred very impressively to that picture and the cross over it, emblems to him of the inseparable connection there should be between childhood and religion. Speaking of the Cross as the symbol of the Christian faith—the light of love and piety kindling in those deep, deep eyes, and beaming out in the way we all know so well—he said, 'O my friend, depend upon it, no theory of human life can stand, which leaves that out, the Cross.'*" From Dr. Putnam's Sermon the Sunday after Dr. Peabody's funeral.

THE CROSS.

As we ascend, from any ſide, the ſucceſſive levels of the world's hiſtory, we behold, as we look upward, on the summit, a cross. The crowning figure, overlooking the world, claiming some mysterious relation with all generations, is the cross of Christ.

Whence and why is this? Why is the ſinless One permitted to suffer? Why does he in whom ſhone forth the nobleſt life of the world submit to death from the world? Because the cross alone could reveal the ſinfulness of man, the worth of the soul, and the mercy of God.

The fact of the ſinfulness of man lies at the foundation of the scheme of redemption. It was no vague idea of it, no theological theory about the origin of ſin, no metaphyſical speculation, but the dark, appalling, universal fact of human error and moral degradation—of ſin hav-

ing its root in the soul—that brought down the Saviour and reared his cross. While he saw its ſinfulness and guilt in the ſight of God, he saw also that what is ſin before God transforms itself into the misery of man. It is a melancholy thought that the ſuffering of the world is ſcarcely more than the measure of its guilt. Wherever we see evil endured or feared, there ſin is present, on one ſide or another, if not the ſole cause of the evil, a malignant influence, exasperating it, and making that deadly which before was all but harmless.

And ſin, while it makes the earth miserable, to man's eyes darkens the heavens. Sin can inflict an evil on man which all the powers in the universe beſide are not able to inflict. It can separate man from God. It can take out of a mortal heart all the cheerfulness of an immortal truſt. Like a deadly froſt, it withers away those ties which ſhould vitally connect man with his Maker. It comes between, an impenetrable cloud, and ſhuts the ſoul up with its own dark thoughts to work out its deſtiny alone. And for man, the creature of God, dependent for all things on the Divine mercy, this ſelf-

invoked retribution includes in itself every imaginable evil. An alien from God; self-outcaſt from his father's home; not daring to think of that Being in whose all-embracing, all-penetrating presence he lives and acts; a sinner without hoping for forgiveness; a dying man with the dread disclosures of eternity before him! An alien from God;—it blots out the sun; it turns earth into a sepulchre; to his distempered viſion the cheerful heavens seem covered with frowns. When we consider where and what man is, there are no conceivable words which express such measureless loss and woe as those of the Apoſtle, *having no hope, and without God in the world!* Frail and sinful, and no God in whom he truſts to support and guide him! A dying man, and over the grave the dread sentence, Without God! Entering eternity, and over its portals flame the words of doom, Without God!

Now the cross of Chriſt reveals to man his guilt. Through it also God proclaims the worth of the soul, and of those intereſts which belong to man as an immortal being. This Divine interference was for no secondary ob-

ject. It was not to advance a retarded civilization. It was not to awaken a loſt taſte for art or science. It was not to arouse the ſlumbering intellect. These things were left to advance or recede according as men were faithful to the light already in the world. This interposition was to awaken the moral nature of man, to rouse it from its lethargy, and to direct the thoughts of men to intereſts which muſt endure forever. Chriſt came because the world was sitting in darkness and the ſhadow of death —a world lying in wickedness. To recover man from such a condition was deemed an object sufficient for the Divine interference. And thus through the cross, erected before the world, ſtanding for all ages to behold, Heaven proclaims in the moſt impreſſive manner the relative value of the ends which man can propose to himself. God sent his well-beloved Son, foreknowing that in accompliſhing his miſſion he muſt thus suffer and die, not to teach man the ways and expedients of earthly success and power, but the worth of justice and love. The cross ſtands, pronouncing a perpetual judgment on the vanity of those prizes which so absorb a self-seeking

worldliness, while it declares the supreme worth of righteousness. Human science points us to the ſtars, and loves to trace out the progress of their ſhining orbs; but the cross lifts up the thoughts to virtues which ſhall ſhine in the firmament when suns and ſtars are extinguished. It rebukes our sordid paſſions. It would elevate the mind to where it may take a juſt view of the eternal intereſts of man. It repeats to the worldly paſſions, to the grasping ambitions that toil and scheme and reign over wiſh and will, What ſhall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul!

The cross reveals the mercy of God, and his present intereſt in the welfare of his creatures. This is the great religious truth which we need to learn. And whatever the occasional speculations of men may be, the heart of man has found no truth more difficult to be received. Our unfaithful, unworthy lives make us feel that we do not deserve the care of God, and measuring God's providence by our deserts, our sins make us skeptical as to his care. The heavens and the earth are full of merciful arrangements, but we refer them to laws, and

separate them from God. They speak to us of the goodness and wisdom of the original design, not of the present Providence of God. The guilty world almoſt fancies that the Almighty One can hardly pay regard to the conduct of creatures that live and die in a day; and the troubled world fears that its insignificance ſhould exclude it from the care of Providence. But if God breaks the silence of nature, and through the voice of his Son declares his merciful Providence, if to save the world from its worſt evils that Holy One suffers and dies, we can no longer doubt of the present interest of God in his creatures. Were an angel to proclaim this great truth momently from the ſkies, his voice would be faint and meaningless, compared with that which comes from the cross. From it Chriſt not only warns the guilty not to imagine that the sins of men are unheeded by the Divine eye. To the troubled he says, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt. To the penitent he says, Return, O prodigal child, to thy Father's house.

In the night of the world we look up to the

cross. There it remains, a central light between the darkness which otherwise would be above and below. Its beams ſhine into the heavens, and reveal the mercy of God. They ſhine upon the earth, and make viſible the guilt of men. Let it ſhine into our hearts, and let us examine ourselves by its light.

We observe this day in commemoration of the crucifixion of him who died to deliver men from their sins. Let us not trifle with ourselves by making it a mere formal observance. If we have come to this place this morning with any serious purpose in our hearts, there is one queſtion we shall aſk before we leave it. It is a queſtion for each one of us. Am I allowing in my life or heart those sins which led to this great sacrifice of love? I honor the cross with my lips. Do I mock him who is upon it by a life heedless of his requirements? Has that great display of God's love been in vain for me, or is it not in vain? And while we ſtand gazing upon the cross, we will not merely beat our breaſts and confess here is the Son of God, we will not merely condemn those who raised it and faſtened him upon it, but we

will resolve that no sins of ours ſhall be conſenting unto his death. If we are guilty of sins for which Chriſt died, those sins ſhall be forſaken. The cross ſhall not be our condemnation, but we will be able to look to it in grateful hope. And may God grant that when our lives are over, and all is reviewed in a higher world, the Saviour may be able to say, for you, it was not in vain that I died.

THE WORLD JUDGED FROM THE CROSS.

Now is the judgment of this world. The cross of Chriſt was a throne of judgment. Men are judged when they are revealed, and the ſtamp of their true desert is fixed upon them. Before Chriſt at this time were gathered,—not all nations—but representatives of the claſſes of human character, from the loweſt malignity to the divineſt love; and it was his trial that called out those actions which disclosed what they were. The presence of the Holy One seemed to exorcise the world, and all evil demons broke forth in hate againſt him their eternal enemy,

proclaiming their own nature in their aſſaults on him. To human seeming, he ſtood, a weak and helpless victim, dragged before their tribunals. But to all the generations since, the aspect of the scene is reversed. To all the world beſide, they were not so much the judges as the judged. All who appeared before him have ever ſince been measured by him and his teachings. The Jewiſh rulers who pursued him without a cause, who dragged him back and forth from Herod to Pilate; who suborned false witneſſes againſt him; who charged him with violating their law, and, finding that unavailing, accused him of the very treason againſt Rome of which they were longing to be guilty, and, through Pilate's fear of the suspicious Tiberius, wrung from him a reluctant condemnation, disclosed their malignity. The Pharisees who hurried on the crucifixion of the Saviour under false pretences, and yet, while trampling on juſtice, reverenced a form so that they would not enter the palace of Pilate for fear of pollution, needed no words to declare their hypocrisy. Pilate, when he waſhed his hands of his innocent victim's blood, and yet delivered him

to death, revealed himself. From that moment, and for ever, they were judged. The judgment of Judas was proclaimed in his own self-murder. The character of Peter,—its weakness and its ſtrength—ſhone out in the denial and in the penitence. The cold barbarity of the Roman ſoldiery, and the fickle but ſavage ferocity of the Jewiſh mob, revealed themſelves as they were. The love of the women who followed him as he bore his croſs along the dolorous way; the devotion of John and of Mary, who had found her way to the ſummit of Calvary through the ranks of ſoldiers, and the infuriated crowd, impelled by the neceſſity in her mother's heart, to ſhare with him whom ſhe had borne on her boſom the laſt agony; and the true, though timid fidelity of the apoſtles, who feared to approach the crucifixion, but who watched at the grave, waited for no final judgment, but then appeared in their true light before the angels of heaven. The criſis which brought their hearts forth into an act was an hour of judgment. Every one who approached Chriſt, as if a light had flaſhed out from within, revealed himſelf. As if a voice from the throne of the

eternal juſtice had spoken, Pilate was judged, and the passers by who mocked with contemptuous words were judged, and as we venture to lift up our eyes, we behold, in the meek sufferer raised by their own murderous hands above them, the one whose character is the ſtandard of appeal and judgment.

But there is a ſtill more practical view of the paſſage. In reading of the Jews, we are, in a manner, reading of ourselves. We cannot forget that the same human nature throbbed in their hearts, as in our own. And as we read, it becomes us not merely to be moved by that great tragedy, enacted before the open heavens, as if it were now all paſt and gone; but the momentous queſtion comes up, and ought to come up, in our bosoms, Had we, with our present diſpoſitions, been there, where ſhould we have ſtood? Yes; what would have been our course? We can hardly believe that we ſhould have cried, Crucify him! It seems impoſſible that we ſhould have suborned false witneſſes againſt him. But ſhould we have looked on with cold eyes, while Heaven's image was trampled under human paſſions? Should

we, like Peter, have denied him?—and, if so, ſhould we, like Peter, have repented of the denial? Should we, like Pilate, have waſhed our hands of his blood, and, having declared his innocence, conſented to his death?—or, like John, would a devout ſenſe of his excellences have drawn us after him to the croſs?

Such queſtions, if we put them to ourſelves, probe the heart. At firſt, it might ſeem as if they could have no anſwer. But there is a double one. We find an anſwer in our conſcious moral affinities. What we love now, reveals what we ſhould have loved then. If we love eaſe more than truth, or power more than right, or gain more than juſtice, or man's favor more than God's, we may pretty nearly know on what ſide we ſhould have ſtood. We are drawn in the way of what we love. The ſpirit of the Phariſee, under all changes of circumſtances, of Pilate, of Peter and of John, ſtill ſurvives, and we ſhould have joined thoſe with whom we have the cloſeſt affinities of character. The queſtion is anſwered in our actions. In that remarkable parable in which all nations are gathered before the judgment-

seat, and are separated as a ſhepherd divideth the ſheep from the goats, and in which the Saviour sets forth the law of the divine judgment;—as one of its moſt observable features, he puts *himself* in the place of every miserable, wronged, friendless, and wretched man, and says, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the leaſt of these, ye have done it unto me." Day by day, in our indifference, our hardness, our injuſtice, our cruelty towards our fellow-men, he would have us underſtand that we crucify the Lord afreſh. And in whatever we do in a Chriſtian spirit to promote righteousness and good-will, or the true welfare of our fellow-men, we honor him. We are carrying out his work, and he accepts it as if done to himself.

The services appointed for this central week of the Christian year, are intended to bring before our minds the events which preceded and followed the Saviour's death. If we meditate on them at all, they must at the least awaken reverence for the Great Sufferer, and horror for the moral malignity or indifference of which he was the victim. But we are called upon for more. Our relations to him are still

as real as if we had looked on his bodily presence. To every one of us he presents himself in his law of righteousness and love, and as we are unfaithful or loyal to that, we are accepting or rejecting him. Let not these commemoration services be a mere form. It avails little to read of what was done of old, unless it impel us to consider what we ourselves are now doing. It becomes us to question our own hearts. What is the judgment which our Saviour would pass on the spirit which governs us in our conduct and which shapes our lives?—Let us examine ourselves and judge ourselves righteously, that we may not be judged.

ATTRACTION OF THE CROSS.

But that which has made the cross the theme for men and angels is, that it attracts around it a sinful world—not chiefly a world of sufferers, but a world of sinners; and not merely attracts, but attracts to save. He, who bore our sins in his own body on the tree, is thereby drawing all men unto himself. Explain it as you may, the

cross is the great regenerating power of the world. When our Saviour was upon earth, it was wonderful how the guilty and the penitent, by some strange attraction, sought him who was ſinless and Divine. They did not go to their fellow-men who were guilty like themselves, but to Chriſt. The guilty are not altogether guilty. There are sparks under the aſhes, the heart of ſtone has in it some touch of flesh, something to which a moral appeal may be made. And the cross is the viſible proclamation of the two great truths which are most needed, and have moſt power to reclaim a soul from ſin.

It reveals, first, as nothing else could, what ſin is in the sight of God. When a philosopher discourses on the evil and guilt of ſin, I may be convinced or not. It is a subject open for diſcuſſion. The words pass lightly and easily by; but when Almighty God sends his Son to die that he may rescue man from ſin, if I take in the meaning of that auguſt and awful revelation, I can only bow in my guilt, and implore pardon of that mercy, which thus condescends to our heedleſſness and unthankfulness.

The fact that there is in the Chriſtian world, among the guilty as among the good, a profound sense of the evil and guilt of ſin, a sense, I mean, of the ſupreme peril and guilt which belong to moral evil, the conviction that ſin is not mere imprudence, but guilt, and guilt before God—a conviction so far beyond what has exiſted in the heathen world that we scarcely find anything even resembling it,—is owing to the cross of Chriſt. And however it may be with the world at large, none of us can pauſe on that death and remember what it was, and what was its object, and remember that he who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, then manifeſted himſelf through the Saviour of ſinners, without feeling that in God's ſight that is the one evil of the world.

It is the cross that convicts us of ſin, and surely it ought ſo to do. For what are we, to whom God thus ſpeaks through the ſufferings of his Son? What ſhall I think of ſin from which God would save man at ſuch a sacrifice? I will not attempt to underſtand the reaſons of the Divine providence. Surely I may truſt him who would thus save me, and my prayer

ſhall be that prayer which seems the only fitting one for any of us, "God be merciful to me a ſinner."

But if the cross were ſimply a revelation of the guilt and peril of ſin, and if there were no hope of rescue save in our own ſtrength, I think the boldeſt of us, when conscious of his weakness, would recoil from that fact in despair. When I say, God be merciful to me a ſinner, what an awful chasm would be made, if I were forbidden to utter the word merciful, while there was left behind only the overwhelming consciousness of ſin? It is mercy that we want, the mercy of God that we need. Mercy, pardon, is the cry of the awakened human heart. And it is the cross which responds to the despairing cry of the penitent soul. I speak not of the inſenſible, of the morally dead, but of those whose hearts are aroused to some consciousness of their spiritual wants. What is it they need, that they may not despair,—that they may have some hope and some energy with which to meet the power of evil? What is needed? What has the world always needed? Not the help of friends as powerless as them-

selves; not the frozen and uncertain precepts of philosophy, but faith that God has compaſſion on them, the aſſurance that he is pitiful and merciful, and will hear their prayer out of the duſt, and will help them in their sore need,—the aſſurance that he does not look coldly on us from the ſky, but that he looks in love; and all language is weak to express this aſſurance compared with the cross of Chriſt. The heavens might break forth into articulate voices of revelation, and they would be meaningless, compared with that great sacrifice. For what is it but saying in the words of the Apoſtle, "He that gave his own Son to die for us, how much more will he with him also freely give us all things!"

I speak not of the purposes of Chriſt's death, so far as they relate to God, but in their relation to the human soul. It is a revelation of those truths which have moſt power on one side to awaken some juſt sense of the nature of ſin, without which we ſhould never think of a better life, and, on the other side, of God's compaſſion and intereſt in man, and his readiness to help and forgive the penitent—an aſſurance without which all hope and life would sink out

of our hearts, as we became conscious of our weakness and insignificance. When the twilight has gone down behind the western hills, and darkness has begun to flood the streets and to cover the dwellings of men,—above, in the clear air, you have seen a gilded cross on which the sunbeams still rested, and as you gazed on its blazing sign, you all at once became conscious from the contrast, of the darkness closing around you, and also saw the visible assurance, that though unseen by you, the sun was still shining with undecaying and undeclining light. So does the cross reared above the earth make us conscious of man's sins and aware of God's mercy. And so long as it remains, and so long as the soul of man survives, the words of Christ will be true; If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me. The suffering shall come to him, who teaches them how to suffer. The selfish shall be won by that self-sacrifice, the penitent shall fly to him for hope, and the guilty shall bow before him even if they do not repent. Christ crucified, the power of God and the wisdom of God, made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

EASTER EVEN.

COLLECT.

Grant, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the death of thy blessed Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections we may be buried with him; and that through the grave, and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection; through him who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

EASTER EVEN.

THE sun had been darkened, and the vail of the temple rent in the midſt. And now, It was finiſhed. Crying with a loud voice, he had said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having thus said, he had given up the ghoſt. Over the dead form of the Saviour, had ſtood, bending in ſilent, unutterable grief, the women of the sepulchre. And now in the tomb lay the holieſt being the earth had ever seen—dead,—a terrible symbol of the universal death of man,—an image of utter, remediless despair,—a scene to darken the earth. Had we witneſſed the reality, it would have needed no supernatural power to make the heavens dark above us.

Then the powers of darkness seemed to have triumphed. Selfiſh ambition, cruelty, rage, hate, ſtill remained on the earth; but the Holy One

was gone from it. It was as if the Divinity had left the ſhrine. Before Jerusalem was taken, so runs the legend, in the night those who miniſtered in the temple heard a sound of ruſhing wings, and voices saying, "Let us depart;" and they knew that though the temple remained, its heavenly gueſts had left it. And so when Chriſt left the earth, one may almoſt believe that all holy beings, all heavenly influences, muſt have departed with him. Then might the powers of darkness have looked out from the clouds, and proclaimed, "It is the hour of our triumph; henceforth the earth is ours."

EASTER.

To-day we go back with the pilgrims of centuries, and stand by the broken tomb of Jesus. Into that tomb, when he was buried, went down the hope of the world. When he arose, there streamed up from its open recesses a light, which has ever since illuminated both earth and heaven. To-day, we will stand by his grave, and hear him as he speaks from above to us who linger amidst these mortal perils and shadows. Nor to him alone will we listen; for it is our privilege to believe that the thoughts and affections of some of those who stand beneath his throne, regard us even as he regards us.

We will welcome this day of Christian commemoration. This day, at least, our thoughts shall rise above the clouds into the region of perpetual sun. We will go back to the broken tomb of Jesus, and take up the words of triumph over death,—He is risen! From the sky we will hear him still repeat, I am the resurrection and the life!—Our earthly homes must crumble, these mortal frames must be dissolved; but from amidst these earthly ruins we behold rising a nobler temple—out of this corruptible, the incorruptible; out of this mortal, the immortal—a heavenly fabric, which needs not the light of the sun, and which is filled with the dead who live again.

CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO HIS DISCIPLES.

A SERMON FOR EASTER.

Jesus saith unto Mary, go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. *John* xx. 17.

THE moſt serious queſtion which a reasonable person can aſk,—if we except that which relates to the being and character of God,—the queſtion whose answer muſt affect more profoundly than any other all the views, affections, intereſts, motives, and reasonable purposes of life, is, whether we ſhall live after death; whether our exiſtence terminates in the grave, or whether it is an immortal existence. This, I say, next to the being and character of God, is the most momentous question which can be proposed for an answer. If it ever seem not

to be so, it is because it is confounded with and lost in others with which it has nothing to do, as, *e. g.* whether one dreads annihilation; or whether any such dread is not swallowed up and lost in the greater dread—being such as we are—of living again. But the magnitude of the true question is not in the least diminiſhed or enlarged by any feelings of ours, whether of anxiety or indifference, but depends on the immeasurable abyss between non-existence and eternal existence—depends on the fact that it includes in itself whatever does most to invest with awe or hope our mortal destiny. To live for only a few years, or to live forever!—all other questions beside this are dwarfed into insignificance.

At times, this is felt even by those whose thoughts are most ſhut up to the present moment. Whether the little child that watched your coming at the window, and ran to greet you at the door and nestled in your heart, is now but a handful of duſt, or a happy creature in heaven, ſtill loving you and ready to welcome you and take you by the hand, as with fearful feet you enter the unknown realm,—cannot be

made a trifling queſtion. However faithful or unfaithful you may have been, it is no trifling queſtion whether the huſband or wife, the parent or child, the companion or friend, is literally no more; or lives as the emigrant lives, who has preceded his family a little across the sea to a foreign ſhore, where all expect soon to find a home. On one ſide, non-exiſtence!—on the other ſide, the dead alive again, eternity, immortality, retribution, and the name which is above every name. Which is my doom? It matters not what man may hope or fear, but between these alternatives lies nearly every thing which can moſt profoundly intereſt a thinking mind.

I regard it as one of the internal evidences of the truth of Chriſtianity, that while it paſſes by all secondary queſtions, it meets this greatest of questions, meets it fully, meets it in the only way in which it could be met—not with poetry; not by philosophical balancings of metaphysical proofs; not by sentimental phrases; not by vague conjectures; but by a viſible fact. Up to that time, one appalling viſible fact had dominated over the world—the fact of death. Death

had reigned. All that had lived had died. The fathers were dead; sages were dead; oppreſſors and oppreſſed, the evil and the good were dead. The earth was one vaſt cemetery; and not one of its graves had been broken. Men might reason and hope and fear and half believe; but always these half beliefs were confronted by the viſible fact from which there was no escape. The riſing hope was chilled and frozen by a wind that blew across the place of graves. There was the inexorable fact of death and nothing to meet it. It tyrannized over the reason, more even than over the imagination of men. No voice had spoken from the cloſing tomb—no voice from the heavens. There was only ſilence above and death below.

Chriſtianity met that fact by the only evidence with which it could be met—it met the *ſkepticism* of the senses, by an *evidence addreſſed to the ſenſes*,—by the resurrection from the dead. We talk of spirituality, as if it did not need this viſible evidence. Let us thank God that he is more merciful than our folly aſks. Somehow, here, our souls are connected with the body, and high as we may soar in faith, the

higheſt flight muſt ſtart from the earth. And God has given juſt the evidence we need for the immortal life, in the resurrection of Chriſt. Without this, the teaching of Chriſt would have been but one more conjecture added to the thousand preceding conjectures of wise and good men. It was his viſible resurrection that broke the horrible spell which had benumbed the faith of man. It was his resurrection which reared over the cemetery of the generations of the dead, the symbol of immortal hope. I do not mean to say that there is not much in nature to *suggest* the idea of a future exiſtence. But ſuggeſtion and hope are not proof or belief. No fact in hiſtory is more certain, than that Chriſtendom owes its belief in immortality to the fact that one clothed in supernatural power and wisdom and goodness, not only taught the doctrine of immortality, but died and was viſibly raised from the dead.

But more than this. What is the ſtate of the departed? Here again I would aſk you to conſider how our Saviour's teachings have in them nothing to gratify an idle curiosity. All those trifling speculations which occupy such

space in false religions, and in our own minds, he paſſes by, and confines himself, in subſtance, to two truths—the ones all-important and only important. One is that evil and good ſhall meet with absolutely juſt awards in the righteous judgment of heaven; and the other that he who enforces the eternal law of rectitude is a Father. It is all expreſſed in the text; I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. All queſtions are answered in this one aſſurance. To my Father and yours?—yes, yours!—guilty, unworthy, who forget him, who return thankless lives for his goodness—ſtill your Father! Were a volume filled with descriptions of the occupations of another life, it would not contain so much as this one aſſurance. Nay, the neceſſary limitations on what was revealed, and the limitations on our underſtanding of it, would be the source of perpetual error. The revelation takes us to that fundamental truth on which the mind can reſt with entire security. It is one of those cases in which the only knowledge which we want is that which lays a solid foundation for the moral sentiment of truſt. What more does

the believer have reason to know, except that he ſhall live under the care of the Almighty Father! Into what new scenes we may enter, we know not; perhaps, as the Apoſtle ſuggeſts, they could not be revealed to those who dwell in the senses; but we know that all ſhall be well. We may truſt all to God, and be happy in that truſt.

Our insensibility to the importance and the influence of the resurrection is caused by the same familiarity, which makes us insensible to the light of the day. The first Chriſtians—many of them—knew in their own experience what it was to look on the grave with moſt uncertain and baffling hopes;—and the aſſurance of a future life was to them like the rising of the sun after the long arctic winter. If Chriſt be not risen, says Paul, then is your faith vain. If the dead rise not, we are of all men moſt miserable. But Chriſt is risen from the dead, he declares, the first-fruits of them that ſlept. And through his rising every believer has the victory over death. Thus every symbol of Chriſt's resurrection was a symbol of hope. Sunday, which was observed as a memorial of

that event, was a day of religious rejoicing. And when at length the followers of our Lord observed this Easter day as the recurring year brought with it the anniversary of the Maſter's resurrection, they observed it as a day of gladness and triumph. Every ſign of mortification was forbidden. During fifty days, writes one of the early fathers, we observe the cuſtom which our anceſtors have handed down to us, according to which no faſt is kept, or knee bent, on account of reverence for the Lord's resurrection.

But the day is in truth as significant to us as it was to them. Death ſtill reigns in the world; and it is the light which ſhines out of Chriſt's grave which disperses the otherwise all but total darkness. Were it not for that event there is no place where friends are accuſtomed to meet, where the memorials of the dead would not soon crowd on the presence of the living.

This is the tenth Eaſter day since I firſt joined you in these commemorative services. Almoſt involuntarily I have been led to look over the records of mortality, and to conſider the contraſt between now and then in this

place. What changes in these few years! Scarcely a family into which death has not entered. Since then, children have become men and women; the youth now occupies the seat which the father filled; the parent miſſes the child; the newly married are surrounded by families; and how many who were the hope of their friends, how many who were the pillars of society, are gone! In the great battle of modern times, as the hiſtorian relates, one laſt immense column was formed, on which hung the fate of empires. At the imperial bidding they advanced through the ſtorm of fire. The misſiles of death ploughed their way through, and thinned its ranks, yet it ſtill moved on. But the ſhattered and mangled head of the column was able to advance only to a certain line. There it melted away, and faſt as the legions preſſed on from behind, the front ranks ſtill ever melted away. So in this proceſſion of life; never beyond a certain line,—and all are gone. What a scene were this—this death-field of the world, if there were no reſurrection!

These ſilent revolutions!—these revolutions of death, which make insignificant the noisy

projects and changes of men!—these ſilent revolutions of mortality, which touch one, and a thouſand ſchemes are paralyzed; another, and households are in mourning; another, and the welfare of a community is eclipſed;—these are the revolutions which ſhrivel to duſt the plans and policies of men, and turn into contempt all human pride and power; which with equal eaſe enter into the palace and call down from his throne him who ſmote the nations with a perpetual ſtroke; and enter into the humbleſt home, bringing ſorrow and ſolitude, and if God be acknowledged, transforming its modeſt earthly hopes into a divine and immortal faith. These ſilent revolutions of Providence, noiseleſs and ſteady as the ſtars, in a brief time make for us a new world. The hills remain; the trees caſt their ſhadows as of old; the waves beat on the ſhore as they beat when we watched them with thoſe who now are gone; but of living beings a new world is around us. Nay; already we are, in a manner, the citizens of two worlds, ſtanding on the horizon between the living and the departed.

These ſilent revolutions! The departed!

A little while ſince and they were here. Are they here no longer? As we recall them, they seem to rise again before us. Again they meet with us. He on whom so many leaned for counsel and help, and without whom it seemed as if the world could hardly go on, takes again his place. The mother leads in her little one by her hand. The huſband conducts the wife, and with her again looks up in prayer to the common Father. The child, in the bright, awed reſtleſſness of childhood, clings to its mother's ſide. They come as they were wont to come, the departed with the living. This day, at leaſt, the dead are with us. Yet, thanks be unto God! nôt the dead, but they who live; —who live more truly than we. And with them present to our memory and our faith, we will lift up our thoughts to Him who is the resurrection and the life.

And do the dead rise again, and ascend to God the Father? Do we here ſtand on the mere threſhold of being? And are we here like those who waited their Lord's coming, that in this forecourt and entrance-hall of exiſtence, we may make some needful preparation before

we enter the illimitable realm beyond? Would that I could impress this truth on your minds, and that I could fix it ineffaceably and forever in my own. The truth which ought to influence our conduct moſt, is not that we are to die, but that we are to live; that they who pass before us over the dark mountains, precede us but a little in a journey in which all muſt follow, and that the very purpose of this life is that we may make some fitting preparation for the new life in which we muſt find our home. These little ones whom God has truſted to us the sunſhine of the dwelling and the heart,—has the parent fulfilled his duty when he has accumulated for them the means for a little more or less comfort or luxury during the few years of their earthly pilgrimage?—Is that what ſhould be firſt and laſt thought of? These little ones,—we are training them, it might be, alas! it *might* be, for heaven. The friends with whom we live from day to day, who are endeared to us by a thousand ties and friendly offices, with whom we consult and enjoy and act, do we remember that in a few years, we who are doing so much to ſhape one another's characters, will have left the

earth only to enter the spiritual world? Why is it that the great truth, that we are thus preparing for the eternal life, is the one which is laſt adverted to, that it is ſo often ſhrunk from as if it were one to chill and ſcare away all cheerful and friendly intercourſe? Alas for us! that the fact around which ſhould gather the greateſt anxieties, the ſublimeſt hopes, the moſt ſerious purpoſes, ſhould be overſhadowed and loſt in intereſts which are tranſient as the ſhadows of the ſummer cloud. For do we not know that ſoon, nothing of value will remain to us, of all our doings, except the Chriſtian virtues we have encouraged in others, or eſtabliſhed in ourſelves? On this day, at leaſt, I call on you, my friends, to conſider the immortal life;—for your companions' ſake, your children's and your own to conſider the immortal life. In a brief time, you and I, who now call to mind the departed, will have joined them. We ſhall have paſſed from these ſcenes, but paſſed away only to enter the eternal world. We ſhall have come under the righteous judgments of heaven. I aſk you not to fear death; but to conſider the ſentence you will there paſs on these lives

you are now living—what the influence you would leave behind—what you will then wiſh you had been and done. You expect to behold Him who died for us all. How ſhall you ſtand before his presence?

Let me present the idea I desire to leave in our minds, in a different form—one which it is ſtrange does not make a deeper impreſſion on us.—Parents live in their children. Every sorrow which ſtrikes them, goes like an arrow through the parent's heart. All labors are easy, all anxieties light, which promise to secure for children comfort, independence, and respect. The parent watches over the child's sickness, protects it from peril, rejoices in its intelligence, and the light of the world goes out with its death. And now, suppose that the conviction ſhould come over the parent's mind, that these little ones are, in very truth, immortal creatures. What, after all his labors, their earthly fortunes may be, or whether prosperity or adverſity shall be moſt for their good, is altogether uncertain. But they will soon enter a world in which we know that a right character before God is their certain bleſſedness. Sup-

pose that the parent ſhould see these little ones, under his training, growing up so as to be fitted for a heavenly happiness—suppose him assured that though one and another may be taken away by death, he ſhall behold them all again in the heavenly world—not one wanderer gone—not one lamb loſt out of the fold—united in purer affections, in higher duties, and in the relations of a more bleſſed exiſtence. I think this would be the faireſt viſion which human hope could ſhape for itself. That would be a victory over death. That would make death itself the miniſter, not of despair, but of hope! Now, it is juſt such a hope as this, not for one family, but for all, that our Saviour would make a reality. And hence it is, that all the teachings of Chriſt, and all the exhortations of the Apostles, direct us to keep in view the future, as the harveſt-field in which ſhall be garnered in the fruits, whose seeds are sown upon the earth.

If I believed that death was the end, I ſhould not thus speak. But neither you nor I so believe. And the confeſſion of our lips, may God save us from disowning in our practice.

We commemorate the resurrection of our

Lord. Nearly the whole Christian world, in one form or another, unites in this memorial-service. It keeps in mind that event, not as a fact in history, but as the symbol and proof that all the dead shall rise. It is an event, remembered with thanksgivings and rejoicings. Because of it the mother weeps less bitter tears over her dead child, and the aged look forward to the restoration of youth, and the dying mingle with their farewells the hope of reunion.

But let us remember that it is the resurrection alike of the evil and the good, of the just and the unjust. And may God give us grace so to live, that the summons from the grave shall be a summons to the everlasting life.

THE IMMORTAL LIFE.

Christ spoke of immortality in two senses—the immortal life which he reveals, and the immortal life which he awakens. He spoke of the resurrection in a double sense. He proclaimed the resurrection of man to a future state of existence; but he also taught, that as a

preparation for it, there muſt be in this world a moral resurrection of the ſoul from the dominion of ſin and from that grave of the ſenſes in which too often it lies buried. . . . As we ſit by the open tomb of Jeſus, let the great queſtion be, Is that ſpiritual life begun in us which prepares one to enter into the immortal life? Are we *now* riſen with Chriſt, that, when a few years are paſt, and death is come, we ſhall enter into those manſions to which he has gone?

ASCENSION-DAY.

Whatever heaven may be, there God reigns. There his laws everywhere prevail. All turn towards him as the planets towards the sun, and reflect his light, and are warmed by his beams. There is Jesus sitting on the right hand of God—not now as when on the earth, with glory obscured, his splendors veiled and tempered to meet the eye, but visibly, the milder image of his father, and surrounded by the myriads whom he has led to salvation. There are the blessed spirits that as a flame of fire come and vanish in the empyrean on the ministries of the Almighty. There are the ten thousand times ten thousand who bore from this world the spirit which belongs to that,—the martyrs of an elder age who suffered that they might save, not now as when last seen on the earth, their faint heads drooping at the stake, or their pale hands streaked with the blood of the cross, but clothed with an immortal body, and those too who bore the obscure trials of life with patient and devout hearts,—they who served God in lives of daily usefulness, and they who, shut out from more active scenes, served him by a submissive trust.

HEAVEN.

A SERMON FOR ASCENSION-DAY.

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. *Mark* xvi. 19.

In the collect for Ascension-day, we pray that as we believe "our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens, so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell, who liveth to make intercession for us, at the right hand of God." It may help to the fulfilment of this petition, and therefore be not inappropriate to the services of the day, to dwell as we may on the nature of that kingdom into which our Lord has ascended.

The first, all-essential and perhaps only essential point which is revealed, and this is most

explicitly revealed, forming the very ground-work and texture of the Chriſtian syſtem, is this, that whatever the happiness of heaven may be, it cannot be enjoyed, farther than there is a preparation for it, in the soul of man. It goes even to the point of declaring that heaven is not so much a place filled with outward good, as a ſtate of the soul. Thus it says, "The kingdom of heaven is within you." Again, (Rom. xiv. 17,) "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink," *i. e.*, does not conſiſt of outward bleſſings; "but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" *i. e.*, it is a state of the soul, strong in the highest principles, filled with holy joy and peace. To refer but to one case more. The happiness of heaven is almost always by our Saviour indicated by a word which expreſſes spiritual activity and excellence. It is the word *life*. The gospel conducts men to life; the righteous enter into life; Heaven is life. The words happiness, felicity, bleſſedness, he rarely uses, but a word which expreſſes all this, and more, the word *life*. And what is this life which is itself Heaven? "This is eternal life, to know Thee the only true God,

and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," not only to have an intellectual faith, but to have the soul filled with the love and trust of God, and with the spirit of Christ. It is to have all those principles and aspirations after a higher excellence which connect man with God, which constitute in him a divine life, and make him a child of God, *alive*. This is heaven. This is the blessedness of heaven. Without this, there is no heaven. No matter with what light and glory and outward good heaven may be filled; it is not enough for a man to be in heaven in order to enjoy its blessedness, but the spirit of heaven must also be in him. The light and life of heaven must first be in the soul, or all the outward heaven to that soul will be dead and dark.

This then is the teaching of Christ, that the blessedness of heaven depends not so much on the place as on the state of the soul. This blessedness wells up from within; is not forced into the soul from without. Whatever heaven may be, the condition of enjoying its blessedness is a heavenly spirit and life. Without this all is in vain. Heaven may be built up and filled

with the glory of God, but the heavenly spirit alone can enter its gates, and see and feel and enjoy its bleſſedness. No matter whether we conſider heaven as a ſtate of the soul or as a place where the soul may dwell, or both, the condition on which alone we can enjoy its bleſſedness is the poſſeſſion of the heavenly spirit and life. Thus far all is clear. And the whole object of the gospel accordingly is to nurture in the soul of man this higher and holier life,—to make men children of God. And without teaching us every thing about which we might seek to know of the nature of heaven, leaving some room for a childlike faith in the goodness of God (which lovely element of the soul would almost be struck out if every thing were revealed,) it declares that whatever heaven is, its bleſſings ſhall be enjoyed by the soul, and by that alone, which is alive with the heavenly spirit.

But though this is the eſſential part, there are teachings of Chriſt which give us some intimations of the state and condition of the soul in heaven.

There will be an exemption from the mala-

dies and troubles of the present life, that arise out of our physical organization. This is but the natural consequence of being freed by death from the senses, and from our present connection with the world of the senses. Thus we read: That this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality. And again, Rev. xxi. 4: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

But the happiness of the good in heaven is not simply passive enjoyment. It is a state of higher and more elevated activity than here. The passions and appetites will indeed no longer reign, and impel men to action. Our present knowledge shall vanish away and seem as nothing in the light of a higher knowledge which shall then dawn on the good; but, says the Apostle, "There abideth faith—hope—love." These are perennial, ever-living principles of moral life and moral activity; not like the passions satiated by success, stunned and made powerless by disappointment, but equable and

permanent, ever impelling the soul to higher excellence, and to look abroad to accompliſh good, impelling men to action, and demanding action as their proper expreſſion.

Again, in the parable of the talents, (Matt. xxv. 21,) when the awards of a future life are ſhadowed forth, to him who had been faithful it is said, "Well done, thou good and faithful ſervant, thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." This would ſeem to indicate that the bleſſedness of heaven is to be connected with ſtill higher reſponſibilities than those which occupy the present life.

Then the word by which our Saviour expreſſes the happiness of heaven, to repeat what was said before, is almoſt invariably the word *Life*—the life of the ſoul. Here we live in the body. There the full life of the ſoul ſhall reveal itself; and it ſhall be so far beyond what we see here, that that alone ſhall seem worthy to be called life, and what we see here but its faint ſhadow. This word life, expreſſes the higheſt activity of the ſoul, called out, putting

itself forth, amidſt the new scenes and relations into which it ſhall be introduced. Nothing could be more opposed to the idea of mere paſſive enjoyment. I know it is spoken of as a place of reſt. But it is reſt from earthly troubles; and of peace—not the peace of death, but that peace which conſiſts in harmony within, when the lower propenſities and paſſions have ceased to ſtruggle for dominion over the higher elements of the soul,—a peace like that of the heavenly powers, which, though they move in their circles with the swiftness of thought, move in eternal harmony, because all obey the perfect law of God.

Some glimpses of this peace we have here. When our souls are moſt alive and earneſtly bent on holy and worthy ends, and we are moſt conscious of the presence of God within us, and most ſincere in performing the works he has given us to do, then do we enjoy the higheſt peace; and this is but a foreſhadowing of that peace which paſſeth underſtanding, of the good in heaven. This idea of activity neceſſarily involves the idea of growth and progress. Faith, hope, love, are all principles of action which

look upward and impel man to aspire to something above himself. This is in accordance with what the Scriptures say (Hebrews xii. 23) of the juſt made perfect. They ſhall ascend step by step and stage by stage towards perfection. We have here probably but the fainteſt conception of the capacities that lie in the human soul. We can appreciate it as little as one who had only seen the bursting of the acorn and the ſlender twig piercing the soil, could at first imagine that in that ſlender twig were folded up the majestic verdure and strength of an oak of a century's growth. How vast is the progress of a good man from childhood to old age, ripening in all virtues, his life ſhining brighter with added graces, his soul ever growing more serene and harmonious. This is but the beginning and image of a progress which ſhall go on through the ages of eternity. We speak of angels and archangels. Perhaps it is not too much to say, that in every human soul, dormant and undeveloped perhaps, but still there, are the elements of angelic natures. St. Paul says, "There is a natural body and a spiritual body," and that we ſhall put off this corruptible

and put on that which is incorruptible. This would seem to indicate that the souls of the good in heaven will still act through some outward organization, but an organization so purified from the groſſness of our earthly bodies, so unlike our present forms, so subdued to the spirit, that it is called a spiritual body. But let us beware of conceiving of this as if it resembled these fleſhly frames in which we now dwell. Here the body preſſes upon and enſlaves the soul. If we are so happy as to enter heaven, we ſhall carry with us none of its earthly appetites and paſſions, but find ourselves clothed upon with a body pure and spiritualized—the vesture, the instrument, the helper of the soul.

WHITSUNDAY.

Collect.

God, who as at this time, didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by the sending to them the light of thy holy Spirit; grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort, through Christ Jesus our Saviour; in whose name we ascribe unto thee all honor and glory now and forever. Amen.

DAY OF PENTECOST.

In the second Chapter of the Acts is an account of the giving of the Holy Ghoſt, on the day of Pentecoſt. After the reſurrection of Chriſt, it was the moſt important event in Chriſtian hiſtory. It has been called, and with good reason, the second birthday of Chriſtianity.

You all remember the remarkable words of Chriſt, recorded in John, in which, during his laſt conversation with his disciples he promises the coming of the Comforter. It was juſt before his betrayal and death, and he was spending with them his laſt hours. In words which muſt have been almoſt unintelligible to them, so contradictory were they to all their preceding ideas, he foretells his approaching fate; he warns them of what they too muſt expect; persecution, desertion, death perhaps were before them, but his love would follow them, and the presence and the love of the Father be with them.

But there was more to be thought of than their personal sorrow. In a few days, the fate of Chriſtianity would depend on what they did or left undone; yet how little were they prepared to be the propagators of his teachings! They had never got over their Jewiſh ideas of the Meſſiah's kingdom. In the very hour of the promise, there had been a dispute among them as to who ſhould be the greateſt. Such were their weakness and faithleſſneſs, that they were wholly unable to dispense with his support. In the language of one of the old Fathers, "He had depoſited the truth in their minds, as a seed is buried in the ground, but they had only the moſt imperfect underſtanding of it." It was with direct reference to this that he promised them, after his death, the coming of the Holy Ghoſt, which is the Comforter, which ſhould teach them all things, and bring all things which he had said to them to their remembrance. They probably but vaguely underſtood his words. His meaning was, that, after his death, in place of his viſible presence, they ſhould have a consciousness of the Divine presence, and of a Divine illumination, which ſhould

be a support and guide in their labors, and give them such a clear and confident underſtanding of his teachings, that they ſhould be the fit Apoſtles of his religion. This promise is repeated several times. "The Father ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the spirit of truth." "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the spirit of truth." "When he, the spirit of truth, is come, he ſhall guide you into all truth,"—words whose full meaning they did not underſtand. But his words, thus repeated, were ſufficient to raiſe the expectation of some very important coming event, while they gave no idea what the precise event ſhould be.

Again, after his resurrection, his laſt command was, that they ſhould not depart from Jerusalem, but wait there for the coming of the Holy Ghoſt, when they ſhould receive power and wisdom, fitting them to become witneſſes for him, unto the uttermoſt parts of the earth. The importance of the event was seen in the command that they ſhould remain in Jerusalem, in the midſt of enemies who had

ſlain the Maſter, and were on the watch for the followers. I dwell on these promises, because they ſhow how momentous in Chriſt's mind was the event of which he gave them aſſurance.

You have heard the promise. When was the fulfilment? "And when the day of Pentecoſt was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a ruſhing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were ſitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." This was followed immediately by the firſt address of Peter, and these events and his words led three thousand to receive as the Meſſiah him who only forty days before had been crucified. There was something so remarkable in the event, that under every oppoſing circumſtance, almoſt at once, the little band of Chriſtians had become a multitude.

Thus far, I have only called attention to the

hiſtory. Let us now look at the circumſtances which made it important. In the hiſtory of nations and of individuals, there are always certain eras and turning-points, which seem to decide the future. This was one of those eras in the hiſtory of Chriſtianity.

Go back with me now forty days. With the consenting voice of rulers and people Jesus is put to death. His disciples, all their hopes and expectations utterly disappointed, with the exception of a ſingle one, fled and hid themselves from the danger. Their number was small, and they were scattered like ſheep without a ſhepherd. They were poor, unknown, from a despised class, and a despised portion of the country. While Chriſt was with them, they had followed and leaned on him, with the wayward helpleſſness of children. Even to the last, they had not comprehended the nature of his religion. They expected him in some way to reveal himself as the national and Jewiſh Meſſiah, and in some way to set up a viſible kingdom. He had taught them his religion, but it was in precepts and in parables, whose words they remembered, but with no just com-

prehenſion of their meaning. Nothing w written, the religion of Christ was committ to the memory of these few men,—men wh were timid, ignorant, without influence, with out any gifts of eloquence, conscious that they had no hold on the popular feeling and sympathy, in the midst of enemies, powerless themselves, and having in the rulers of the land, instead of protectors, the most dangerous foes.

And now will you tell me what are the prospects of this new religion? We look at the Apostles through the mist of eighteen centuries. Their forms appear enlarged and transfigured. But remember what they were, and where they were; all of them ordinary men, not one of them poſſeſſing a leading spirit, full of Jewiſh prejudices, fearful of danger, flying from their Master in his hour of peril, scattered by his death, lost in the midst of a great city like Jerusalem, and, in addition to every thing else, not even comprehending the miſſion of him for whom they were the sole witneſſes. I aſk again, what will be the fate of Chriſtianity? What prospect have these few Jews, rising above the ideas of the greateſt philosopher, in

undertaking to change the religion of the Roman empire? How many of them who will not retreat from their baffled hopes to their former labors and obscurity? If in some retired corners, and to a few friendly liſteners, they ſhould, in casual conversations, tell of the excellence and unjuſt death of Jeſus, and attempt to give some account of his teachings, who does not see that what they say will partake of the color and narrowness of their own minds? —that it will not be so much the religion of Chriſt, as their diſtorted conceptions of it, which will furniſh the subject of their conversations? Conſider these things, conſider that there was no written word, by which they or others could correct their miſtakes or disagreements, that all depended on their courage, on their devotion to this special work, and on their underſtanding of Chriſt, and tell me, judging from all human experience, what will be the fate of the Chriſtian religion?

Aſſuming that Chriſtianity is a revelation from God, and that in its promulgation by Chriſt it was atteſted by miracles, that it was thus uſhered into the world under the viſible

sanction and protection of the Almighty providence; assuming this, it is reasonable to expect that means should be taken to secure its propagation over the world; that the same Providence which gave it to man through Christ, would provide, first, that the real religion of Christ should be lodged in the world essentially as it came from him, and in such a form that after ages might have a reasonable confidence that there was in the world the means of knowing what Christianity was as it came from Christ; and, secondly, that it should take firm root in the world, and spread so widely among different races and languages, that its after-diffusion over the rest of the world might be safely left to human agency, and to the natural order of cause and effect; and, thirdly, we should expect this to be done with as little of supernatural interference, and with as little infringement on man's free-agency as was consistent with attaining the result. In other words, applying this to the facts in the case, we should expect that the Apostles would be illuminated so as to understand what Christianity was, secondly, that the will, the courage, and the desire to spread it

over the world, ſhould be fixed in their hearts; and thirdly, that they should receive that wisdom and those aids which were neceſſary to secure its propagation.

Let us now turn back to the day of Pentecoſt. I have already described the character of the Apoſtles, and the ſtate of their minds and feelings. Judging from all human experience, the day before that event took place, the Apostles were utterly incompetent to be the propagators of Chriſtianity. They had not the underſtanding of it, nor the courage, nor the decided and self-devoted purpose needed. If Divine interference was needed to teach Chriſtianity at firſt, it was now equally needed in order that the few men who received it ſhould be enabled to plant it in the world. The day of Pentecoſt came, and the Apoſtles received the gift that had been promised.

What took place on the day of Pentecoſt? Three things, and each eſſential. First, their minds were illuminated. The truths which were in them suddenly lighted up in their full meaning. Their mental and moral faculties were so aroused and invigorated, that they un-

derſtood what they had remembered. A Divine influence exalted their minds to a competent underſtanding of what they were to teach. But more than this was needed. In the history of Moses occurs an event which illuſtrates the truth of the Bible to human nature. When he is called to deliver Israel, his heart impels him to the work, but ſtill he ſhrinks back from the great enterprise. He, a ſingle man againſt an empire!—he recoils from the conteſt. He doubts his capability. May he not be deluded in thinking that it is a call from God? An illuſion of the mind, mistaking a ſtrong mental impreſſion for a Divine voice? He wants and needs an outward sign to confirm the inward conviction. And these outward signs are given, so that he may have no misgivings, and may never doubt that he is engaged in God's work. And surely the Apostles needed such a ſign. We are more dependent on the senses than we sometimes acknowledge. Might not the time come hereafter in their despondency and discouragement, when they might think that the inward illumination was after all an illuſion? Certainly they should begin their great work,

fortified by every reason, in the belief that it was the work of God. Therefore the inward illumination was attended by an outward ſign. "Suddenly there was a rushing ſound as of a mighty wind," and the air, lighted up, and divided into quivering tongues of flame, reſted above their heads; and in addition to this they felt an impulſe on them overruling all other deſires or fears, to go forth and proclaim the religion of their Maſter. It may be uncertain how much is meant by the gift of tongues. Whether it was a power, when occaſion called, to ſpeak languages which they had not before learned, or whether it was a gift of ſpeech, ſuch as they had not had before, a conſcious unlooſing of their minds and tongues, which enabled them to proclaim the truths of Chriſt with a convincing energy,—whatever it was, it was ſufficient to enable them to plant in the moſt diverſe lands the Chriſtian religion.

ALL-SAINTS.

Collect.

O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect, in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord; grant us grace so to follow thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for those who unfeignedly love thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.

THE myſterious realm of the Inviſible, which forever bends over us like another ſky, and whose planetary influences have in all ages moved to their depths the tides of hope and fear, was lighted up,—its dread abyſſes illuminated, by the Sun of Righteousness. The commemorative rites of the early Chriſtians were of a kind to raise the thoughts above the earth. they buried their dead under their altars; they reared ſhrines and churches over the places of martyrdom, so that they could scarcely think of their friends except in connection with Chriſt and with God. They cheriſhed their memories in the ſanctities of the heart, and aſſociated them with an imperiſhable faith. The dead were to them as living mediators between them and God. They had gone before, their tents were pitched farther forward in the realms of

the opening morning light; but in this advance they only became the better guides of those behind. The dead and the living ſtill made but one brotherhood; a part ſtill remaining in the ſhadows of the temple's porch, a part ascended into its brighter glories, but all making one church, one people of God.

THE DEPARTED.

Homes once bright with sunſhine are now sad and lonely because of some precious and cheriſhed life which is no longer present to bless the broken circle of affection. Fair young children have gone to Him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of God." The promise of youth has been transplanted, that its harveſt may ripen in a more genial realm. Manhood in the full vigor of its powers, in the midſt of useful labors and clasping affections, has been called away; and dwellings have been made desolate because the wife and the mother, the central light of the home, is no longer there. There

are few, in looking back over a year, who do not miss from the ranks of the living some near kindred or some cheriſhed friend.

As I look back on the paſt year, I will not say a sad, but a deeper ſhadow has fallen underneath these arches. Of those who are gone, one had peculiar relations to this church, not only on account of his own intereſt in it, but as a representative of those who through succeſſive generations had occupied a prominent place here as they did in every useful and honorable labor in the community.

Another has gone in the full-bloom of her matronly life. She was one who, from her childhood, carried sunſhine with her wherever she went, and to me the very ſtreets seem to have loſt something of their light since ſhe is gone; while the homes where her affections centred will never cease to miss her inspiring voice and presence. When ſhe died a ſtring was snapped in the melody of life; and the muſic of life's march grows more faint and sad by the way.

From another home, both of its honored heads are gone. Companions in life's journey,

united in good works from early youth to ripened age, they have paſſed on almoſt together, hand in hand, to another world. The ſtranger and the poor and the neglected shall no longer meet them at the gate of that home, which was the abode of hospitality and benevolence. His death was scarcely more a private grief than a public loss.

And closely following him, a neighbor and friend, in a great old age, after a life identified with every important intereſt in the community, another of our number has gone. He was one of those rare examples of men who carry the freſh, warm heart of youth, unworn and unchilled by the contacts of life, through all the experience of manhood and age. He rejoiced in the prosperity of others, and rejoiced above all when he could promote it. He could not bear that others ſhould suffer if he could help it. Every winter wind that smote the dwellings of the poor, chilled him, and every inſtitution or effort which could benefit them, found in him an aid which waited not for the aſking.

Thus, as we meet here, beſides the living, there is a ſilent congregation present to the

memory, which is not viſible to the eye. They come up together with us into these courts with the gathering company of worſhippers. The aged man, his venerable form bent with years, ſits in the same place which from Sabbath to Sabbath he was wont to occupy. The young mother glides again ſilently to her long-vacant seat. The daughter, with the dew of her youth upon her, a creature of light, comes like a sunbeam to her parent's side. The young man, juſt ready to go forth upon the adventure of life, enveloped in a radiant atmosphere of affection and hope, looks again from the accuſtomed place. And from the ſhadow, the calm, clear eye of the little child looks out, as when, in mingled awe and wonder, it ſtrove to pray, even as it saw its parents were praying. How eaſily does the sorcery of the memory reſtore the features of the departed, and fill up the vacant seat with those honored and beloved.

And thanks be to God, we are not mocked. Our spirits ſtill hear the tender and solemn words, repeated to each one, Thy child liveth! Thy brother ſhall rise again? What we call the transient illusion, is but the symbol of a

higher reality. They do ſtill live. This day they worſhip God with a purer worſhip than when on earth, and perchance our prayers go up mingling with theirs before the Infinite Goodness. It is a serious thought—it brings the invisible world near—that there are those who, but a few months ago, knelt at this altar, who, to-day, while we are commemorating the Saviour in his death, may be looking on him in his glory.

REMEMBER THE DEPARTED.

Let the departed be held in holy remembrance! Let not a lineament fade! But let it be a Chriſtian remembrance. Remember them not as those who were, but as those who are. Seek them not in the tombs, but seek them in the heavens. Death may diſſolve all false and unreal bonds, but it only makes closer all real ones. Not one such bond is broken. Remember them as beings who look on you with both a wiser and tenderer intereſt than when they were with you—wiser, as better knowing the

true ends of life, and tenderer, as better knowing its ſtruggles. Remember them as beings who more than ever rejoice in every ſtep you take in a Chriſtian way, and who mourn not so much for your trials, as for your ſins. Such a memory hallows the earth, and it brings almoſt within our vision a higher world. In the Apocalypse the heavens and the earth were seen to pass away, and before the eye of the seer arose a new heaven and a new earth. It is scarcely too much to say that the sublime vision is repeated in the experience of every Chriſtian believer. As friend after friend departs, what was before our earthly home, expands with them into the ſkies. The spiritual world of faith, is added to the world of sight. Every tie broken here, is carried upward to be made spiritual and immortal.

And there are not those alone whom we have known and loved, but the good of all ages. Nor these alone. He is there, through whom it is given us to have this bleſſed faith; and whose visible resurrection was the emblem and pledge of the resurrection of all. He is there,—not as when on the earth, crowned with thorns,

and fainting under the cross,—but clothed in the brightness of the Father; and over all, the Infinite Goodness, the All-embracing Love, in whom, and through whom, all things subsiſt. Before this vision revealed to faith, the earth and its intereſts no longer seem of sole or chief importance. We attain to some underſtanding of the words of the beloved disciple;—I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the firſt heaven and the firſt earth were paſſed away. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they ſhall be his people, and God himself ſhall be with them, and be their God. And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there ſhall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain; for the former things are paſſed away.

OUR SAINTS.

And there are others ſtill nearer to us and clothed for us with a peculiar sanctity; the

pure and good whom we have personally known and who have left us. All our friends are not among those on whom our eyes rest, and whom our hands touch. As we ſit alone, there rises around us a shadowy company, the companions of our thoughts, dear ones, it may be, no longer on the earth, but who to us are the best earthly emblems of heavenly purity and innocence. The crowd that preſſes on us in the street may be made up of strangers, but these are the intimates of our hearts, when the viſible world is most shut out then are they nearest to us. They look on us with eyes of love from the darkness, they speak to us from the silence; the sound of their remembered voices is still the muſic most sad and most sweet to our hearts. Though we call them not by that name, these are our saints, appointed to be such by Providence, who takes them away while yet unſtained by the earth, and makes them in their purity immortal. They are our saints whom God through mutual and uniting affections conſtitutes our special teachers. Their innocence rebukes our low and worldly spirit, their disintereſtedness rebukes our selfiſhness. They look down from heaven

upon us, and would lift up our faith with our affections. As they pass from us they leave behind them lines of light trailing in the skies. Their presence there gives us a new intereſt in the spiritual world. They connect us with heaven. The thought of them is to be cheriſhed, not as if they merely belonged to the paſt, but as beings that live *now*, who love us with a tenderer, wiser, and an immortal love,—bleſſed teachers before whose presence what is evil in us ſhould ſhrink abashed away. May we not believe that as the incense, which is the prayers of the saints, rises before the throne, their supplications go up to the Infinite Father for those who, amidſt the toils and temptations of earth, can never forget them? Through those connections between mind and mind so little underſtood, is it an absurd faith to suppose that the better thoughts which visit us, strange guests, we know not from whence, may sometimes come from them; that among the ministries of heaven, it may sometimes be permitted them thus to help those who linger here, and who ever ſtand so much in need of help? Their presence on the earth was the sunshine of the

heart and the home. Their departure leaves behind them a treasure of holy and hallowing memories on the earth, while it carries new light into the ſkies.

Who can imagine that they have ceased to be our friends? We know not the laws of the ſpiritual life;—but if even while here on earth, and while it is confined to the body, the mind has, through its material organs, a kind of univerſal preſence, and its thought outſtrips the ſunbeam, can we ſuppoſe that they who have advanced before us are more reſtricted in knowledge, and that eclipſe falls on all that they leave behind? I cannot doubt that this world lies open to their view. With enlarged powers, with higher faculties, while all ſeems darkneſs to us, all to their purer viſion may be light around us. How muſt our ſins ſhock them! with what compaſſion muſt they look on our infirmities!—more tender, doubtleſs, more patient, more juſt, than when they were with us,—but with how profound a pity and anxiety muſt they regard every ſtep of those they love, which turns aſtray from the heavenly path! Oh! if in our ſins and follies we would but

look up, it seems as if we might *see* those eyes of love looking on us from the heavens, and *hear* through the parting clouds a voice of tender warning. And I would fain think that there are bleſſed thoughts, coming unawares, and holy impulses, and better purposes, which viſit the ſoul in its ſtruggles, from the helping love of those in heaven. Sure I am that our danger is not from too great faith in the reality of the ſpiritual world. That world, where is it? Is it not the teaching of reason, that it is all around us, that these heavenly ſpaces are occupied with ſpiritual inhabitants? God is with us, Chriſt is with us, and when death ſhall lift the curtain of the tent in which we here dwell, and unclose our ſpiritual viſion, I cannot but think that it ſhall be with us as with him whoſe eyes the prophet touched, and behold, he ſaw all the mountains round about filled with the hoſts of the Lord! But I care not to ſpeculate or reason on this. God grant rather that we may feel the moral power of this idea of ſpiritual preſence! May God forgive us, that in his bright univerſe our ſouls are ſo often dark with ſin! God give us grace to keep our ſouls pure,

that we may be fitted ourselves to be with the pure!

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

The spirit of Chriſt has descended, repeating itself in succeſſive generations. He has awakened in multitudes of hearts a spirit in some imperfect degree like his own. And these men are the saints. They conſtitute his church—the Chriſtian commonwealth—the kingdom of God on earth.

All poſſeſſing a spirit like his, who have lived, or who now live, belong to it. And the number is larger than we think. Not only are they to be reckoned among the saints, the fires of whose martyrdom are the guilt and the glory of the earth, but the multitudes obscure and unknown, who have practised juſtice and truth, who have honored God in unnoticed virtues, and have bowed to his will, truſtful and believing, in their trials.

There are saint-like lives and martyr-deaths which are not recorded, and worth all the more in Heaven's sight because unsuſtained by human

admiration—men that have lived poor, rather than receive gains spotted with injuſtice—men that have given up ambitious hopes because the paths of success were crooked and evil—they who out of their neceſſities have ſtill found something with which in Chriſt's name to help those ſtill poorer—gentle and believing hearts that bear for others what they would not for themselves, energetic and heroic hearts, that do for others what they would not for themselves—the multitudes scattered among a myriad homes, whose lives, however imperfect, are governed by an habitual reference to the Chriſtian law. And of these you may trace back nearly all that is good in character or elevating in faith to Jesus Chriſt. They conſtitute his church, reaching down through generation after generation—the universal church to which all who endeavor to be his followers belong, differing in character with every ſhade of imperfection, agreeing but in one thing, in reverencing him as their guide. This is the church of Chriſt, of which our particular churches are mere portions and fragments. And it is this view which gives ſignificance to our Chriſtian rites. That rite of

commemoration in which we to-day join—its great purpose is to bring us into conscious connection with Chriſt and all good men. We call it the communion. It is good for us to remember the self-sacrificing and the holy—to remember those who have lived amidſt temptation and have not sinned—who have devoted the means of self-indulgence for the welfare of others, whose devout hearts have prompted them to beneficent lives. We cannot think of them without having our better purposes ſtrengthened.

And when we commemorate the saints—the ransomed of the Lord belonging to all ages of his church—we ſhould above all cheriſh the memory of him, from whom they draw the principles of action and graces of character which make them deserving of our remembrance—of him who to them was the teacher and guide, the life and the light. When I remember the unnumbered multitudes on whose lives the benignant power of Chriſtian truth has ſhed more or less of light—those whose afflictions it has soothed, whose paſſions it has reſtrained, and whose purposes purified,—how

many homes it has entered with holy miniſtrations,—homes of penury and friendleſſneſs,—homes where grief had ſmitten, where trial had brought its diſcipline, and death its gloom—how many it has upheld who were ſinking in the waves,—how many of the young it has trained to uſefulneſs,—now many of the aged cheered with immortal hopes—how many better thoughts it has ſuggeſted, how many merciful deeds prompted, how many homes bleſſed,—when I see it, its power not ſpent, but gaining new force and developed into clearer light, going on to meet the coming generations, to breathe into ſad hearts its conſolations, to raiſe up men from the earth by the power of a divine faith, to ſtrengthen the conſcience by bringing it into alliance with God, and diffuſing on every ſide a higher virtue and Chriſtianizing ſociety, and after conducting all who would follow her in paths of peace on earth, like a radiant angel, opening before them the gates of heaven, I feel how fitly Jeſus was called the Saviour and Redeemer, the Way and Truth and Life, the beneficent mediator between a merciful God and the ſinful, weak, and dependent children of men.

And when I think of the descriptions which we have of the Chriſtian Church, there rises before my mind a commonwealth of nobler ſtructure than the world has ever seen. To it all belong who love juſtice and truth and mercy, gathered out of all climes and ages. To it many ſhall be found to belong who never heard the name of Jesus, but who ſhow their vital affinities with him by obeying the higheſt law which they have. To it all belong, who in any sphere have rejoiced to know the will of God and to do it—full of imperfections, it may be, but agreeing in this, that they all look upward to the higheſt light. And separated only by that cloud which is transparent to faith, are all the juſt and good who have paſſed from the earth—children that have left the arms of parents to dwell in the presence of him who loves them with a ſtill holier love—the righteous that needed not repentance, and the guilty who by penitence have, in being forgiven much, learned to love much,—all occupied in the varied miniſtries of God—riſing level above level, circle above circle, and above all, that central light in whose beams all heavenly virtues and heavenly

affections are quickened with an immortal life—the commonwealth of good men, of the juſt made perfect, of the innumerable company of angels, of Chriſt the Mediator of the new Covenant, of God the Judge of all. Happy are they whom the discipline of life prepares to take even the loweſt place in this society of which Chriſt is the head, and on which reſts the perpetual favor of God.

THE CONCLUSION.

If this were all, the very beauty of nature would b mock the human soul; for amidst all her beauty, throug the foliage of her gardens gleams the marble of her tomb. and in the midst of groves and fields and forests swell, in unending ranks, the billocks beneath which rest the generations of the world. But over the horizon of the earth, dawning, brightening, rises another light which is not that of the sun. From the midst of the clouded glory above, from the bosom of its august mystery, come the warning and the welcome of heaven to earth. It is a warning, not cruel and stern, but sadly solemn, which says, God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. It is a voice of welcome, which says, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

The early Christians, prompted by the instinct of a profound faith, connected all that was most important in life with the death and resurrection of the Saviour. They baptized their children beneath his cross; they hallowed the marriage-bond by thoughts of him; they buried their dead around the altar where they knelt to commemorate his sufferings. Thus every tie broken here was carried upward to be made spiritual and immortal; and the very tears which filled their eyes were crystal orbs—lenses—through which a vision was gained of heaven.

THE LAMPS ARE GONE OUT.

A YOUTH has taſtes which are the grace and charm of his mind. Engroſſed by other purſuits, he ceases to cultivate them ; he puts them aſide for a season, he thinks that at any time he may resume them. But a few years pass, and they have faded away. Other taſtes have supplanted them. In that direction his mind has grown hard and rigid. He does not even wiſh to resume them. They are loſt to him forever, their light has gone out.

The youth has warm social affections, but in a ſtrenuous devotion of himself to some business, he ceases to cheriſh them. He has no strifes. No alienating paſſions divide ; but his friendly relations are neglected and supplanted by mere business relations. He neglects the old ties, one by one. His friendly connections are loosened, his social sympathies decay. They

are eaten away by neglect. As he advances in life, he suddenly finds that he is alone. The many friends of other years are withdrawn. He has ceased to care for their friendſhip. There is a dreary vacancy around him. The neglected lamps have burnt out, and, in a peopled world, he is alone.

A fair home rises before your eyes years ago; the evening brought its members together in happy bonds. Brightly ſhone the lamps over them, and brighter was the peace in their hearts; but they heeded not the conditions on which much happiness is preserved. They become self-indulgent, they seek their pleasures apart, they lose a common and habitual confidence in the duties and purposes of life. There is simply a neglect of mutual tenderness and conciliation and conceſſion and helpfulness. The united family drops apart. There has been no distinctly marked wrong. The confidence and unity of affection has died out by neglect. Years pass, and the man ſits in the same room; the twilight falls; the wintry moon looks in at the same window; there is only light enough to see that he is alone. The lamps are gone out.

'By neglects, which none have heeded at the time, the light of life is gone.

These are but illuſtrations of what perpetually takes place in the religious life. A man ceases to read the Bible, and through this neglect all personal sense of its value dies out of his mind. He ceases to pray; the thought of God becomes less frequent, he is less mindful of his dependence on God, he is more engroſſed with other things, and is less thoughtful of all religious intereſts and duties. The light that revealed the heavens is gone out, and he is shut up to the earth.

Of the ſkepticism that is in the world,—not the doubt, which is but the tranſition ſtate of an inquiring mind from ignorance to knowledge, —of the ſkepticism which conſiſts in insenſibility to spiritual realities, how much is the simple product of neglect! We measure the importance of things by the place they occupy in our minds. Engroſſed by other things, the mind is crowded and absorbed by present claims. Religious truth fades into the diſtance, and we fancy it is nothing to others, and that it is nothing in itself, because it has ceased to be any-

thing to us. It is like the man, who, in growing selfish himself, has loſt faith in the diſintereſtedness of all other men.

There is nothing more beautiful or hopeful in a child's mind, than its almoſt inſtinctive truſt in God. How easy and undoubting is its faith, how near does God seem to him. He has no ſkepticism, no clouds are between him and heaven. The candle of the Lord ſhines on his head, and by its light he walks through darkness. Bleſſed privilege of childhood—bleſſed gift from heaven, this ſimple, undoubting truſt in God! And how in moſt cases is it loſt? Not by ſingle and great misdeeds, but by ceaseless neglects, as unregarded as impalpable moisture which rises from the valleys, but which, while no one heeds it, thickens into a fog that obscures the sun. Sin comes in and clouds the clear perception of God. Worldliness crowds out the thought of God from our mind. The paſſions, with their noisy sophiſtries drive out the natural faith given to the child, and when he is to become a man, and has travelled half the road to the tomb, he finds that the ſimplicity of his faith is gone. Heaven is farther from

him than in his early years. The presence of God is no longer around him. The light is fading from this world, and in his soul there are no anticipations of a brighter dawn.

There is no sadder ſight than the gradual going out of these lights, kindled by God for the guidance of man. Woe unto him who lives on, and the longer he lives ſinks more and more below the level of his youth. As you have travelled through the valley when night was faſt descending, and the miſts were gathering over the ſtreams, and the damp dews were falling, and the chill evening was benumbing you, you have seen, ſtill lingering on the diſtant summit of the hills, the laſt golden but fading beams of the day. This was all that was left of the brightness of the morning and glory of the noon, and this was faſt disappearing. So is it with him who has been faithless to the better aspirations and purposes of early days. He has sunk into the valley, and the ſhadows of death gather over him, and all that remains to cheer him is the sad, reproaching, fading light that lingers on the summit of his youth. O holy light, faſt dying away, while no higher light

dawns! He who has thus sunk below his youthful purposes may call those purposes and aspirations idle dreams. Alas, they have been dreams to him, but they might have been happieſt realities. And though only dreams, they have been the beſt part of his life, and the only part he can reſt upon without reproach. However faithless he may have been to the promises of his youthful heart, there was a time when high purposes were in his soul. They were the light of his life, they lighted up the earth and the heavens—but the lamps are gone out!

WISDOM OF AN UPRIGHT HEART.

We need not go to the few and great illustrations. Who has not again and again seen ordinary minds, under a powerful religious influence, riſing almoſt to the level of genius, the moral awakening extending itself to all the faculties of the man? A good conscience sometimes seems almoſt identical with wisdom. I think that the more experience we have of human nature, the more we rely on the ſimple

inſtincts of an upright heart. Who has not seen ignorant men, quite incompetent to defend their opinions, and yet, on matters within the range of their knowledge, poſſeſſing an almoſt fatal certainty of judgment, especially in regard to the moral character both of ends and men. And the secret of it was that they had no indirectness of aim, no by-ends to accompliſh; they were seeking only what was right, and in seeking what is right one is taking the ſhorteſt road to what is wise.

A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.

The youth argues about the worth of religion. There is, he feigns, no reality in it. It is a deluſion, a pretence, without life, without power either to support the trials or virtues of men. But he leaves his companions, he is alone, he reviews the paſt, and his heart reproaches him for the words he has uttered. Far away, on the bright horizon of his early years, ſtands one like an angel of light, belonging both to earth and to heaven, one long gone, but whom he will

them, but we are subject to those which equally prove our allegiance. To us comes the command, be faithful unto death—faithful to the claims of duty, and to opportunities of usefulness,—faithful to Chriſt and to God. We acknowledge Chriſt as the Lord and guide. In his spirit, then, enter into the trials of business and of pleasure; in his spirit, then, help the weak, and suffering, and oppreſſed; in his spirit ſtand ſtrong amidſt all temptations. Fidelity! It is itself an ennobling sentiment. Fidelity to a leader who is above us, fidelity to Chriſt, it makes us almoſt ſharers in his excellences. Fidelity to ſtand ſteadfaſt in the truth—fidelity, whatever the sacrifice of self-denial, fidelity like that of the Roman legionary, contending for an earthly crown, to his ſtandard,—this is what the lives of saints and martyrs teach us. Fidelity in our allegiance to Chriſt and to God. What meaning in these words!

When Pompeii was unburied, they found at one of the gates of the disentombed city a Roman sentinel. He had been poſted there, and there had ſtood and died. We may easily imagine his feelings during the few hours of fearful

trial. Above in the diſtance the burning mountain sent up its volumes of flame, filling all hearts with supernatural awe. The air was filled with hot and ſtifling vapors, around him the burning aſhes fell in blinding ſhowers, the affrighted multitude fleeing for life, crowded madly through the gate beſide which he ſtood, to find a place of safety—till he was left alone and forgotten. Doubtless life was as dear to him as to others, and under that form cased in iron, and ſtanding so motionless, was doubtless a heart which beat with all human fears and affections. But there was in him a principle mightier than all else, fidelity to his truſt. He had been poſted where he ſtood, and not withdrawn. He could ſtand there—could see the whole city escape, he could remain alone to die, but he could not desert his poſt. Such was the rude Roman's sublime fidelity to an earthly truſt. Such, Chriſtian, be thy fidelity. Thy Maſter hath set thee to do his work in thy sphere—to help the suffering and the oppreſſed, to enlighten the blind, to build up in thine own soul, and to ſhow forth to the world, reverence for God and his moſt holy truth. To thee, all

who have lived righteously, apoſtles, and martyrs, and saints, say, ſtand at thy poſt and be faithful—faithful unto death, to do and to bear God's will, and to thee also ſhall be given a crown of life.

BEYOND THE VEIL.

Death does not interrupt the continuous being of man. The gospel has bridged across and filled up the mighty chasm between time and eternity. He that lives now, shall continue to live.

They who have travelled in a mountainous country, have probably seen the clouds settle down, and hang around their summits. As you have ſtood in the valley, you have seen the road winding hither and thither for miles perhaps, ascending by degrees the ſide of the mountain, until finally it was loſt in the low hanging clouds. And as you have looked you have seen one traveller and another, slowly climbing this winding road, diſtinctly viſible, until at length they entered, and were suddenly loſt in the

cloud. They were no longer viſible to our eyes, and yet you did not doubt that they ſtill held on their way, paſſing over the mountain range. And while you were ascending it on one ſide, they had already perhaps passed through the cloud, and descending beheld the weſtern sun whose beams ſhone upon the other. Such a scene is a picture of our ſtate. In the valley of life are gathered the multitudes of the world. In viſion you behold their lengthened files of young and old, in ſlow proceſſion ascend the ſhadowy mountain. They wind hither and thither; they may seem to make little progress, but the mighty proceſſion is ever moving on, there is no ſtay, no reſt; and as you look upward, you behold it entering beneath the cloud whose dark portentous maſſes hang there forever. They enter and are seen no more; but on the folds of that vaſt cloud, as they tumble and sway in the air, you behold, in letters of light, quivering as if its syllables were lightnings, the word *Eternity*. It is the cloud of death, and that flaming word alone is the gospel promise of immortal life; that mighty proceſſion whose foremoſt ranks are ever loſt from

your eyes are not loſt, but ſtill move on over the dark mountains, and soon pass through the ſhades and behold the sun that forever ſhines. Continued exiſtence, immortal life, this then is one of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.

TRUST IN GOD.

With an habitual sense of the Divine presence and care, the trials of life are lightened. That cloud, which drifting alone in the heavens, was so black, when seen in the light of a merciful Providence, ſhines with celeſtial radiance. Even that trial to which all are called, the loss of kindred and of friends, changes its character when we see it in connection with God. We speak of the consolations of sorrow. I believe we often miſtake as to their true nature, and many from personal experience of the little peace which is to be derived from the common topics of comfort, imagine that there is no consolation save in time and in forgetfulness. It is certainly an infinite boon, when we bear a friend to the grave, to know that all is not there, that

nothing is there that we love,—to know that while we reſtore the dust to its kindred dust the spirit has been taken up to its God. But multitudes have believed in the doctrines of an immortal life, and have found but little comfort in it when they look down into the grave. Not that this faith is powerless even to them. Far away from behind the distant horizon of mortality dawns the light of an immortal hope; but it is distant, and now there is separation, and the craving, clinging sense of loss and bereavement. Consolation comes chiefly not from truths offered from without, but from the state of the heart within. It ſhines not upon our outward eyes, but the day-spring rises within the soul, and the true consolation may be described in a single sentence. It consists in a profound, habitual sense of the Divine presence, and a trusting submiſſion to his will. Where this exists, there is such an opening of the heart in confidence to God, such reliance, that in the midst of the deepest affliction, and in the midst of tears, there is Peace—peace such as the Saviour himself had in the season of his trial.

If we look at a friend's departure, separate

from all his spiritual relations, look on it as an isolated event, if we forget God and remember only ourselves, it is the dreariest as well as the saddest spectacle on which the heavens look. Under the fair sky, in the midst of this open world, one that loved, and was loved, feebly pants forth his life. Separation, tears, loss, the grave, and bleeding hearts, and wounded affections, and broken ties, are words which but feebly represent the thoughts which close around that scene.

But this is not to see death as it is. It is like looking at the sky, and forgetting that in it there is a sun. In that chamber of mourning, there is the presence of one that is Invisible. He is present there—He, whose love is wiser and more compassionate than yours, and all this takes place in accordance with his wise and merciful law. Through the ministries of his Providence, he is calling one away, dear to him as to you. Slowly, and painfully, the thread of life is unloosed; slowly and painfully the spirit separates itself from its mortal dwelling; but God is there, and it is his hand. At length there remain visible to you only the closed

eyes and ſtill features of death. But were your eyes couched, so that you might look in on immortal scenes, you ſhould behold the one you loved, freed from the burden of the fleſh, already with purer and holier beings; you ſhould behold that Infinite care ſtill ſheltering the departed as it ſhelters those who remain, and love uniting those on earth and those in heaven. In the hour of sorrow, we may say, It is God's hand. It is his presence; and when the heart can truly say, "I truſt in thee; I reſign to thee that which was so loved; I commit my own feeble and faltering heart to thee,"—in that self-surrender to God, in that alliance of the child with the Infinite Parent, in that truſting faith which in the hour of death sees not chiefly the body, but the soul loosening itself from its mortal frame, sees the presence of Him who not only gave but is taking away—there is a consolation which all the darkness of the grave and the transient separations of death cannot extinguiſh.

And we, too, muſt pass through the same scene. And what ſhall give us support and enable us to meet with self-collected composure

that hour? If the mind retain its full activity, and is aware of what is taking place, but one thing—truſt in God. In that hour, my ſtrength ſhall fail, my friends may ſtand around me, but their help is in vain. They may watch my cloſing eyes, they may bear my body to the grave, but there the tendereſt affections leave me. Yet there is One Being ſtill with me. He was with me in health. He was with me in unnumbered bleſſings. He made those around me dear to me. In every conceivable way he has given me aſſurance, such as no earthly parent gives a child, of his goodness. He is ſtill with me, and as the body fails, the spirit becomes only more conscious of his presence.

CHRIST OUR LIFE.

I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered. *John* xv. 5, 6.

THE gospel teaches that there is a vital relation between the eternal life in the soul and that life in Jesus Chriſt. The text states it, "I am

the vine, ye are the branches; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me." The vital circulations flow from the trunk into the branches, and when the branch is cut off, it withers and dies. It is no matter of accident, but a part of the great order of Divine Providence, which connects the humbleſt wayſide virtue on earth with the great life of heaven. Almighty God has provided many ways for enlightening the human intellect,—made the earth, and the ſky, and the varied discipline of our mortal lot, the means of exciting, ſtimulating, and developing the earlier rudimental forms of human virtue. But for the renovation of the world, for raiſing it above the level of its ordinary earthly motions, the great centre both of moral illumination and inspiration is Jesus Chriſt. In that Divine life, raised between heaven and earth, is our life. We will dwell on it, hoping that some rays of its brightness may break through our ſins into our hearts. In our weakness we will approach him, though but to touch the hem of his garment. In a depraved world we will look to him, that we

may keep our faith in divine excellences. We will look to his cross that we may learn to abhor our ſins. When in my frailty I deſpond and deſpair, and dare not look up to the Infinite Holiness, I will say, "O thou great Interceſſor, who didſt know this mortal lot, pray for me who am unworthy to pray." And when the ſhadows of death gather over us, may we be able to say, "Lord Jesus, we truſt in thee?"

Let the myriads of mourners who have found comfort, not in inſenſibility, but in ſubmiſſion, advance and say whence came the light of hope in that Gethsemane of trial. And they ſhall answer, We bowed with Chriſt—with him we said, "Thy will be done," and the presence that strengthened Him gave strength to us. Let those redeemed from sin advance and say, how it was Christ who led them by the hand to a better life.

Come, all saintly virtues, that through faith have triumphed over the world, and cast down your palms of triumph before the feet of the Deliverer. But if this may not be, if this world knows not how to utter his praise, if the earth is only to witness his ſhame, there is another

scene which ſhall witness his glory. In vision, the seer beheld from the sacred mount the centre of a boundless amphitheatre, the grateful transports of a world that he had redeemed. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and ſtrength, and honor, and glory, and bleſſing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Bleſſing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.

That chorus in the ſkies comes not down through our earthly atmosphere, but God grant

that the ſpirit here may be found in us, that ſhall enable us hereafter, though it be moſt humbly and in the outermoſt ranks, to join in that ſong of the redeemed.

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